United Nations S/2012/157

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 March 2012

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the alternate representative of Germany on the Security Council

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 2 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Germany stating that Mr. Christian Doktor has been appointed alternate representative of Germany on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, this letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

12-26332 (E) 140312

Please recycle

United Nations S/2012/158

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 March 2012

Original: English

Letter dated 14 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am attaching herewith a letter addressed to you, in your capacity as the President of the Security Council, from Ambassador Berhane Gebre-Christos, acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (see annex).

In this regard, I have the honour to request that the present letter and the annex thereto be circulated as a document of the Security Council

(*Signed*) Tekeda **Alemu**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ethiopia

12-26411 (E) 150312

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 14 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

As you are well aware, the Security Council has been closely following Eritrea's destructive role in undermining peace and security in our subregion. In this regard, you will recall that, recently, the Council adopted resolution 2023 (2011), which imposed additional sanctions on Eritrea for its destabilizing activities in our subregion.

Unfortunately, Eritrea has continued its reckless acts in flagrant violation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. The terrorist attack against a group of 27 tourists travelling in the Afar Regional State of Ethiopia on 16 January 2012 is indeed a clear indication that the regime in Asmara is determined to pursue its destructive role in utter disregard of international law and norms.

As all peace-loving countries would agree, Eritrea should not be allowed to continue to undermine the peace and security of our subregion with impunity. In spite of the efforts of the international community, it is regrettable that so far it has not been possible to coerce Eritrea to fully comply with the relevant resolutions and desist from its destabilizing activities. Therefore, Ethiopia calls upon the Security Council to do everything possible to ensure that those resolutions are fully implemented. Meanwhile, Ethiopia reserves its right of self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Berhane **Gebre-Christos**
Ambassador
Acting Minister

United Nations A/67/72–S/2012/159

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
16 March 2012
English
Original: French

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session
Item 96 (e) of the preliminary list*
Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Letter dated 13 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the Committee, held from 5 to 9 December 2011 at Bangui, Central African Republic (see annex).

I should like to inform you in this context that on 8 December, the ministerial meeting adopted a Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa (attached).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annexes as a document of the General Assembly under item 96 (e) of the preliminary list for the sixty-seventh session, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Charles Armel **Doubane**
Permanent Representative

* A/67/50.

12-26636 (E) 300312 130412

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 13 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Contents

		Page
A.	Introduction	4
B.	Summary of the proceedings	5
	I. Election of the Bureau	5
	II. Adoption of the agenda	5
	III. Report of the outgoing Bureau	6
	IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa	7
	V. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative	16
	VI. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa	17
	VII. Promotion of peace and combating insecurity and crime in Central Africa	20
	VIII. Impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa	21
	IX. Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/189	22
	X. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security, and of General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control	23
	XI. Briefing by bodies with observer status with the Committee	24
	XII. Report by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on the institutional evolution of subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including ratification of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central Africa multinational force as well as the development of strategic partnerships	27
	XIII. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States	27
	XIV. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa	27
	XV. Place and date of the next meeting	28
	XVI. Other matters	28
	XVII. Adoption of the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting	28
C.	Expression of thanks	28

Attachments

I. Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa 30

II. Statement at the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Centra' frican Action Network on Small Arms 32

A. Introduction

1. The thirty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Bangui, Central African Republic, from 5 to 9 December 2011.

2. The following member States participated in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The secretariat of the Committee was comprised of members of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by His Excellency Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Head of UNOC A.

4. The following United Nations entities took part in the proceedings as observers: UNOCA, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (CNUDHD-AC).

5. The following entities also participated as observers: the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

6. The meeting of experts opened with a ceremony which included, inter alia, a statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, who reported to the Committee on the mandate of UNOCA and informed the Committee that the responsibilities of the Secretariat of the Committee had been transferred from UNREC to UNOCA. He also advised the Committee that Mr. Paul Goa Zoumanigui, senior policy advisor and head of the UNOCA political unit, had been appointed Secretary of the Committee. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Head of UNOCA also thanked the Director of UNREC, Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, the outgoing Secretary of the Committee, for the important work he had done in that capacity.

7. The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, read out by the Special Representative of the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic, His Excellency Albert Akendengue;
- A message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, read out by the Special Representative and Head of the African Union Liaison Office in the Central African Republic, Her Excellency Hawa Youssouf Ahmed;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by his Special Representative to Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abou Moussa;

- A statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Communities of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, His Excellency Manual Salvador dos Ramos;
- A statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad, General Antoine Gambi.

8. The closing ceremony featured:

- A closing statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Central Africa and Chief of UNOCA;
- A closing speech by General Antoine Gambi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad.

B. Summary of the proceedings

I. Election of the Bureau

9. General Antoine Gambi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad, was elected Chairman of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa by acclamation.

10. The Committee also elected the following countries as members of the Bureau:

- First Vice-Chairman: Republic of Burundi
- Second Vice-Chairman: Republic of the Congo
- Rapporteur: Republic of Equatorial Guinea

II. Adoption of the agenda

11. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Election of the Bureau
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa
5. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative:
   - Status report on signatures and ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention;
   - Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa
6. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa:
   - Implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities (proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations);

- Briefing by the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

7. Promotion of peace and combating crime in Central Africa:

   - Maritime piracy in Central Africa;

   - Illegal exploitation of natural resources

8. The impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

9. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/189

10. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women and peace and security, and General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

11. Briefing by entities with observer status with the Committee: the African Union, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (CNUDHD-AC), United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

12. Report of the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including the status of ratifications of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security Council (COPAX) and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central Africa Multinational Force (FOMAC), and on the development of strategic partnerships

13. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

14. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

15. Place and date of the next meeting

16. Other matters

17. Adoption of the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting.

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau

12. The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau read by its Rapporteur. It commended the members of the Bureau on the high quality of their work, and, in particular, their efforts to promote the signing of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and

Assembly (Kinshasa Convention) and the substantive and material preparations for the thirty-third ministerial meeting, carried out in close cooperation with UNOCA in its capacity as secretariat of the Standing Advisory Committee.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

13. Given the differing readings of paragraph 84 of the report of the thirty-second ministerial meeting, the delegations decided that the Economic Community of Central African States would continue to submit a report on that item at future meetings. With regard to the ultimate purpose of the report, the Committee agreed that it should contribute to the elaboration of specific recommendations to be implemented with the support of ECCAS and other partners. In that context, the delegates apprised the Committee of the evolving political situations, domestic and cross-border security situations and governance, humanitarian and human rights concerns in their respective countries.

14. The discussions pointed up contrasting developments in the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa since the Committee's last meeting. On the one hand, significant progress has been achieved in the consolidation of democratic processes and the normal functioning of institutions. On the other hand, certain States in the subregion have had to deal with worrisome security situations.

15. In the political sphere, the period under review was marked by the preparation and organization of various elections in certain countries in the subregion.

16. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, while the calm that now prevails in some conflict zones is welcome, Central Africa has also had to face a certain number of threats to peace and security, including the resurgence of rampant banditry and acts of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and residual pockets of insecurity in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

17. Member States have undertaken substantial efforts with regard to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights. Relevant legal and institutional instruments governing these matters continue to be adopted and implemented at the national level.

18. The geopolitical and security situation, country by country, is as follows:

- **Republic of Angola**

19. There is a climate of peace and stability throughout the Republic of Angola. An extensive updating of the voter registry is now under way in preparation for the 2012 elections.

- **Republic of Burundi**

20. The delegation of Burundi briefed the Committee regarding social and political developments in the country and noted that since the last presidential elections the security situation has been relatively calm. However, there are pockets of insecurity fuelled by armed bands across the country. The Al-Shabaab terrorists have also stated their intention to commit terrorist acts targeting Burundi. The

Government and people are pooling their efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the country.

21. The delegation also informed the Committee of some useful steps introduced to guarantee public calm and promote development in the country. An independent human rights commission has been set up, and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is ongoing. The law on political parties was adopted by the Parliament and promulgated by His Excellency Pierre Nkurunziza, Head of State and President of the Republic.

22. With regard to persistent rumours in certain quarters of an emerging rebellion, the Government of Burundi has just published a memorandum on the national security and political situation to elucidate the matter both within the country and internationally.

23. Burundi just hosted the parliamentary session of the legislative assembly of the East African Community, which gives an indication of the favourable security situation in the country. It was the first international conference on the Lake Tanganyika basin, and was followed by the thirteenth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the East African Community. Burundi presided over the Community from 30 November 2010 to 1 December 2011.

24. A meeting of intelligence chiefs of the member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was also held in Bujumbura in November, and measures were taken to address actions by negative forces operating in partnership with terrorist groups based primarily in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

25. Burundi has continued to host delegations paying official visits to Bujumbura, including one by His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa. There have also been regular meetings between the Head of State and his Rwandan counterpart, His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda.

26. Moreover, Burundi contributes to the quest for peace in Somalia and other countries by sending troops on United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions, in particular to Haiti, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan. Finally, the delegation of Burundi stated that the country would be willing to host the next meeting of the Committee.

- **The Republic of Cameroon**

27. The political highlight was the presidential election, which took place on 9 October 2011, resulting in the re-election of the incumbent, His Excellency Paul Biya. It was the first vote organized by Elections Cameroon, an independent organization tasked with organizing elections in Cameroon.

28. The outcome was accepted by all candidates, although they noted some minor shortcomings owing to the very recent inception of Elections Cameroon. The Supreme Court convening in its capacity as Constitutional Court and international observers concluded that these shortcomings were not of a nature to undermine the credibility of the election results.

29. Cameroon has undertaken reforms to its electoral system, and consultations to that end are under way.

30. During the inaugural address by the President of the Republic before the National Assembly, the consolidation of the social and political climate was reaffirmed with the announcement that some institutions provided for in the Constitution of 16 January 1996 would be established, including the Senate and the Constitutional Court, and that measures would be taken to improve the operations of Elections Cameroon, launch a major public works programme beginning in January 2012 and address embezzlement of public funds and corruption.

31. Overall, the security situation is calm and poses no threat to peace in the subregion. Nonetheless, it must be recognized that while Cameroon has made every effort to hold onto its major achievements of peace and stability, during the period under review, there have been threats related to the infiltration of the Islamic sect Boko Haram and weapons originating in Libya and incidents occurring recently on the border of Cameroon and the Central African Republic involving undisciplined Central African soldiers. Fortunately, these incidents were quickly brought under control thanks to bilateral contacts. The border between the two countries was reopened on 27 November 2011.

32. Some acts of piracy were recently perpetrated in the Bakassi region, following an attack on a banking institution in Douala. One of the attacks occurred on 9 October 2011, resulting in the death of two gendarmes who had been providing security during elections in the area around Isangélé, in the south-west. There have also been attacks by independent armed gangs (the African Marine Commando and Bakassi Freedom Fighters).

33. In the social sphere, the Mission to Regulate the Supply of Consumer Products, established by the Head of State on 1 February 2011, is now operational. It is currently organizing markets on a regular basis at which basic necessities are made available to the public at very competitive prices.

34. In application of Act No. 2005/006 of 27 July 2005 on the status of refugees in Cameroon, on 28 November 2011, the Head of State signed Decree No. 2011/389 on the organization and operation of agencies addressing refugee issues in Cameroon. This decree will permit Cameroon to provide for the promotion of the rights of refugees, with the cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, through two newly established bodies: the Refugee Status Eligibility Commission and the Commission for Refugee Return.

35. As part of the effort to reduce youth unemployment, 25,000 young graduates were recruited to work in the Cameroonian civil service and on large-scale construction projects.

- **Central African Republic**

36. Following the inauguration of the President of the Republic on 15 March 2011, establishment of all democratic institutions has been a major feature of the political scene in the Central African Republic, in particular the formation of a broad and inclusive Government encompassing all of the country's prime movers, including civil society and the political opposition. There has been gender mainstreaming, with 6 women now in the Government as against 4 in the previous one, and the establishment of a National Assembly that now includes 13 woman deputies as against 9 in the previous one.

37. The Government signed a ceasefire and peace agreement with the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) rebels, as a step toward that group's accession to the 2008 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

38. The President of the Republic also went ahead, in June 2011, with the launch of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the north-western part of the country, which demobilized 4,000 ex-combatants. The operations will continue in the central part of the country and in the north-east, where the rebellions of the CPJP and the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) are smouldering.

39. The clashes in September 2011 between the CPJP and the UFDR, which are dominated by the Rounga and Goula ethnic groups, respectively, resulted in 50 fatalities and the displacement of some 4,000 people.

40. In the aftermath of the ceasefire signed between these two movements on 8 October 2011, a peace caravan, organized at the initiative of the Mediator of the Republic, travelled the length and breadth of the Bamingui Bangoran, Vakaga and Haute Kotto regions, with a view to reducing tensions and promoting peaceful coexistence among local communities.

41. The forum of African ambassadors and the Mediator of the Republic have offered their good offices to settle the conflict involving the Central African Republic and a rebellion led by Baba Ladé of Chad, in order to bring peace to the regions where the combatants are rampaging.

42. The United States Government has set up a coalition contingent, deploying United States soldiers in the south-eastern part of the country to fight the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), which has been declared a terrorist organization by the African Union.

43. The African Union has also authorized deployment of a regional intervention force under the auspices of a special envoy.

44. In addition, the Peacebuilding Mission, which participates in the architecture for peace in Central Africa, is planning a gradual, incremental withdrawal, with 2013 as its target date, with operations to be carried on by the Forces armées centrafricaines.

45. In the area of cross-border security, the Central African authorities continue to work to combat trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances.

46. On the economic front, the Government hosted a round table with development partners with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 16 and 17 June in Brussels, Belgium, in order to raise the awareness of the international community on financing needs for programmes contained in the second poverty reduction strategy paper.

47. The Central African Republic's economic prospects may be hampered by the decision of the AREVA group to postpone exploitation of uranium resources in Bakouma and the delay in developing limestone deposits in Bobassa.

48. The Central African Republic has resolved to make instability a thing of the past and put political and military upheaval and disturbances behind it.

49. With domestic uprisings now consigned to history, the primary sources of insecurity in the Central African Republic are related to turbulence originating abroad. These situations raise the issue of the State's sovereign control over all of its territory, and also of course represent a subregional threat.

50. More than ever, the Central African Republic is in need of the support of the international community to calm these last hot spots of unrest and focus on rebuilding. Unless there is peace and security, there can be no economic development beneficial to the population as a whole.

51. The Committee has expressed its grave concern about the Chad-based rebellion led by General Baba Ladé that is taking root in the central part of the Central African Republic and working to spread its influence to other parts of the country.

52. It has asked General Baba Ladé and his men to leave the territory of the Central African Republic unconditionally and without delay.

53. It welcomes the steps taken by the African Union and other partners of the States affected by the presence of the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army to eliminate this terrorist armed group.

54. In response to the intervention by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad on the fight against terrorism in Central Africa, the Committee adopted the Road Map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa. A copy of the Declaration is attached to the present report, and it will be on the agenda at the thirty-fourth meeting of the Committee.

- **Republic of the Congo**

55. The political and security situation in the Republic of the Congo is stable. The consolidation of democracy has been reinforced with the successful conclusion of the partial senatorial elections of 9 October 2011. The successful conduct of the voting process was acknowledged by the opposition. That augurs well for the legislative elections of 2012.

56. On the humanitarian front, the Government continues to assist large numbers of refugees, particularly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

57. Tripartite agreements among the Congo, the countries of origin of refugees and asylum seekers and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are being implemented with respect for the obligations of all parties.

58. Within that framework, the second tripartite meeting between the Congo, the Republic of Angola and UNHCR on the situation of Angolan refugees living in the Congo was held from 18 to 20 October 2011 in Pointe-Noire.

59. That meeting established a timetable of activities for the voluntary repatriation of those refugees, in particular 72 of them who indicated their intention of returning to their country of origin.

60. With respect to refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visits to the areas of return by the tripartite technical working group confirmed a definite improvement in security conditions. There was a significant increase in the number of persons registering their intent to return.

61. The voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees living in Gabon also took place, in collaboration with UNHCR and the Gabonese Government. In that regard, more than 800 Congolese refugees were repatriated, while others opted to remain in Gabon, choosing alternative solutions, in conformity with the provisions of the relevant international legal instruments.

62. In addition, on 11 November 2011, the Government of the Republic of Gabon declared the cessation of refugee status for former Congolese combatants living on its territory.

- **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

63. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued its efforts to preserve a climate of peace and stability throughout the territory.

64. There is one major political event to report: the combined presidential and legislative elections held on 28 November 2011, as required by the National Independent Electoral Commission. Generally speaking, the voting took place without incident, despite a few irregularities observed here and there. The Congolese people are awaiting the announcement of the results two weeks from now.

65. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is involved in the preparatory process for the 14th Summit of the International Organization of la Francophonie and of the 28th Permanent Council of la Francophonie, in February 2012, in Kinshasa.

66. With respect to the security situation, the situation on the ground has shown remarkable progress, except for the three provinces in the east: North Kivu, South Kivu and Orientale where there are still several areas of insecurity and pockets of resistance on the part of isolated armed groups such as the LRA and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which are struggling to survive.

67. With respect to promoting peace, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a member of ECCAS, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, inter alia, has committed itself to a number of agreements that promote the free circulation of people and goods. Concerning the promotion of disarmament and programmes to limit weapons in the subregion, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has destroyed 314,000 weapons of all calibres. Moreover, the country has set up provincial centres for marking as of February 2012, to be followed by weapons collection. A National Acton Plan on small arms and light weapons has been developed for a period of five years.

68. At the diplomatic level, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is continuing to strengthen its relations with its neighbours.

69. With respect to the humanitarian situation, there has been a favourable evolution in the eastern part of the country.

- **Gabonese Republic**

70. The overall situation in the Gabonese Republic continues to be peaceful and stable. With regard to the political situation, the Gabonese Republic will hold legislative elections on 17 December 2011. The National Autonomous Electoral Commission validated 475 candidacies. Approximately ten different parties,

including the Majorité Républicaine pour l'Emergence as well as the opposition, will participate.

71. On the diplomatic front, Gabon's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council ends on 31 December 2011. During its membership, Gabon played an active role in the Security Council's consideration of issues of peace and security. The Gabonese Republic contributed to the adoption of resolutions, decisions and recommendations related to the Council's mandate, with a particular concern for issues and threats linked to peace and security in Central Africa.

72. The Gabonese Republic also played an active role in advancing Security Council debates on the thematic items at the core of its agenda.

73. Concerning humanitarian matters, 11 November 2011 marked the cessation of refugee and asylum-seeker status for Congolese nationals who have lived in Gabon since the civil war of 1997-1999.

74. The Government of Gabon has worked with the Government of the Congo and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to implement the voluntary repatriation of Congolese nationals.

75. As part of its preparations to co-host with Equatorial Guinea the Africa Cup of Nations Football Championship, to be held from 21 January to 12 February 2012, in 2010 the Government of Gabon began the recruitment of 9,000 youth from across the country to join the country's defence and security forces. Among the aims of that operation were to ensure freedom of movement and to protect people and property during the games.

- **Republic of Equatorial Guinea**

76. Since the last meeting of the Committee in Sao Tome and Principe, political activities in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea have focused on five main events:

- the election of His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo as Chair of the African Union for the period from January 2011 to January 2012;
- preparation for the 17th African Union Summit in Malabo (in the city of Sipopo) from the end of June to the beginning of July 2011, on the theme of: "Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development";
- adoption of a new Constitution after a referendum held on 13 November 2011, with the aim of strengthening democracy and development in the country by limiting the president to two seven-year terms of office, as well as creating the position of Vice-President, establishing a Senate, a People's Defence Committee and a Tax Audit Court to ensure the transparent use of revenue and natural resources;
- preparations for the preparatory ministerial meeting for the Africa-South America Summit to be held from 21-22 November 2011;
- the inauguration of the Basilica of Notre Dame de Guadalupe in Mongomo in December 2011.

77. All those events were highly successful on all levels, especially with respect to defence and security.

78. In terms of bilateral cooperation, Equatorial Guinea focused in particular on strengthening its relations with South Africa, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Cameroon, Nigeria, and in general with Africa as a whole.

79. During the period under review, both domestic and border security have been characterized by stability and normal functioning of the national security services. Equatorial Guinea has succeeded in controlling the influx of migrants onto its territory and in stemming the rise of banditry in its large cities.

80. On another theme, for the past four years the Government of His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been implementing a Plan of Action for the Economic and Social Development of Equatorial Guinea, Horizon 2020, adopted at the second national economic conference in 2007. Among the primary strategic areas of this Plan, which fits perfectly with the Millennium Development Goals, are diversification of the economy and poverty reduction with a focus on improving basic social services such as education, health, housing and the advancement of women from a gender perspective, including through infrastructure development and expansion of the new information and communication technologies sector.

81. As a member of the African Union Commission, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and ECCAS, and owing to the determination of President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, who has worked tirelessly to consolidate peace and stability in Africa and especially in Central Africa, Equatorial Guinea has recently ratified most of the agreements pertaining to those organizations.

82. In addition, Equatorial Guinea has been actively preparing for the Africa Cup of Nations, which it will co-host with Gabon in January and February 2012. All measures have been taken to ensure that the competition takes place under optimal conditions.

- **Republic of Rwanda**

83. Since the last meeting of the Committee, the overall situation in Rwanda has been characterized at the domestic level by stability and normal functioning of its institutions and by progress at the bilateral and multilateral levels.

84. At the domestic level, since the last presidential election the country has been engaged in the consolidation of democracy and economic and social development.

85. Domestic and cross-border security has continued to be maintained efficiently. The voluntary return of refugees and former combatants from the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda is eloquent proof.

86. Bilateral and multilateral relations between Rwanda and the member countries of the Committee have improved in recent months. His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, and His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, made State visits to Kigali in October and November 2011 respectively.

87. At the multilateral level, Rwanda's commitment to strengthening peace and stability in its subregion is evident from its increased cooperation in the context of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (ECGLC), the Economic Community of Eastern Africa and the International Conference on the Great Lakes

Region. In this context, Rwanda hosted high level meetings during which matters of peace and security were discussed.

88. In March and June 2011, two ministerial meetings of the Council of Foreign Affairs of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries, were held respectively in Rubavu and Bujumbura. In September 2011, the Ministers of Defence and Security of countries members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region met in Kigali. In November 2011, the United Nations held a high-level meeting in Kigali on "Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Countries: The Experience of Rwanda".

89. With respect to economic matters, despite the difficult situation, the Government took measures to encourage investment and improve the macroeconomic situation to reduce poverty and to support the construction and modernization of public infrastructure, as well as to implement projects in the area of rural development, water management, energy, education, health and food security.

90. A definitive solution to the question of Rwandan refugees is near. The Executive Committee of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, Rwanda and their countries of refuge are in the process of implementing the cessation clause on 31 December 2011, which will enter into force on 30 June 2012.

- **Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe**

91. The overall political situation in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe was one of calm, the normal functioning of institutions, and stability in the aftermath of the presidential elections held in July and August 2011. Although there were certain verbal exchanges, the elections took place under good conditions. The outcome of the vote was the election of the country's first President, His Excellency Mr. Manuel Pinto da Costa, paving the way for a period of cohabitation that has so far unfolded in a climate of dialogue and harmony.

92. With respect to governance, the Government is pursuing a policy of reform in the justice, defence and security sectors.

93. On the economic level, despite the difficult situation, exacerbated by the present international financial crisis, the Government implemented a number of measures aimed at improving the macroeconomic situation in order to reduce poverty, combat corruption and support the construction and modernization of public infrastructure. Projects were also begun in the areas of rural development, and in the sectors of water, energy, education, health and food security.

- **Republic of Chad**

94. There has been remarkable progress in the overall situation in Chad since the Committee's last meeting. With respect to domestic politics, the dialogue between the Government and the opposition has yielded positive results. Several hundred political prisoners were granted amnesty during the fiftieth anniversary celebrations held on 11 January 2011. In a similar spirit, the electoral cycle began with the legislative vote on 12 February 2011 and continued with the presidential election on 24 April 2011. His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno was re-elected.

95. Concerning the legislative vote, the ruling party, the Mouvement patriotique pour le salut (MPS) obtained an absolute majority with 133 of the 188 seats in the National Assembly. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the peace process has been encouraging and is proceeding under politically favourable circumstances. Both the legislative and the presidential elections took place without clashes, to the satisfaction of all international observers and opposition party leaders.

96. With regard to security, an extensive discernment programme has begun in N'Djamena and will be extended throughout the country.

V. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative

• Status of signatures and ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention

97. The Committee took note that all 11 States members of the Committee had signed the Convention.

98. It also welcomed the efforts under way by the competent authorities of all the signatories of the Kinshasa Convention to achieve its swift ratification so that it can enter into force no later than the ceremony commemorating the Committee's twentieth anniversary, planned for December 2012 in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo.

99. The Committee also welcomed the subregional seminar to raise awareness among government experts, parliamentarians and civil society organizations of Central Africa about the Kinshasa Convention, held from 14 to 16 November 2011 in Brazzaville by the ECCAS Secretariat in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of the Congo and with financial support from the European Union. The purpose of this seminar was to increase the involvement of all stakeholders, in order to achieve the ratification of this important instrument by their respective Governments.

• Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa

100. The Committee took note of the measures taken by the ECCAS Secretariat to internalize the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa through a meeting of the Defence and Security Committee of COPAX held in July 2011 in Douala, Cameroon.

101. Furthermore, the Republic of Angola, which had formally received the document on the Code of Conduct at the Defence and Security Committee meeting in Douala, has submitted it to the Chief of the General Staff of its army for evaluation and consideration.

102. The Committee also noted that the Republic of the Congo had already taken the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct into account in the regulations for its defence and security forces. A standing technical committee for education on international humanitarian and human rights law was established within the security forces by Decree No. 2007-159 of 14 February 2007. One of the missions of this Committee is to hold training seminars on international humanitarian law for instructors.

103. A training course for international law instructors was held from 24 to 28 January 2011, with the participation of six officers from the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

104. Seminars to raise awareness are planned for such paramilitary services as customs agents and park rangers.

105. The Committee was informed that in the Central African Republic a code of professional ethics for forest rangers has been developed which takes into account the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa.

106. The Committee once again welcomed the willingness of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to assist Member States, in collaboration with the ECCAS Secretariat, in dissemination and training on the Code of Conduct. It reaffirmed the importance of the Code of Conduct as a tool for consolidating democratic governance of the security sector in Central Africa.

VI. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

- **Implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities (proliferation of small arms and light weapons and disarmament of civilian populations)**

107. The Committee took note with interest of the briefing by the Republic of Angola on the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in its territory. It also heard a description of the measures taken to address the problem through the continuing implementation of a programme of collection of arms from the civilian population consisting of four stages: (a) awareness-raising; (b) voluntary arms collection; (c) forced arms collection; (d) assessment of all activities carried out. The programme being carried out by Angola is at the stage of forced arms collection, although awareness-raising is ongoing.

108. During the period 2008-2011, the National Commission, aside from specific arms collection activities, undertook advocacy with the competent authorities for a revision of national laws concerning the use and bearing of firearms, granting of licences to private security companies, and the control and taxation of armouries or weapons depots.

109. In statistical terms, during the period 2008 to November 2011, Angola collected a total of 81,569 weapons, 44,998 chargers, 402,937 munitions and 12,701 explosives. The majority of these arms have been destroyed.

110. The Committee also listened with interest to the briefing by the Central African Republic on the measures taken by the competent authorities to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Committee also took note of the presentation by the Central African Republic describing how the National Commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons for disarmament and reintegration (CNPDR) had completed the Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons Project in June 2011, which had been implemented by means of funding from Japanese Cooperation. This project, with funds managed by UNDP, allowed 522 civilians to turn over to the Commission over 430 weapons and 120,000 munitions in exchange for development kits.

111. In October 2011, the Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in Djibouti, announced that the Central African Republic had joined the Regional Centre; it subsequently sent two missions to Bangui in November 2011. The first mission was able to hold a workshop on dissemination of the guide to best practices in disarmament and on capacity-building for members of the National Commission, with the aim of promoting better understanding of the Nairobi Protocol. The second mission, composed of the Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary of the Regional Centre, came to Bangui to make contact with members of the Central African Government to brief them on how the Centre functioned.

112. A vast campaign to raise awareness among the public and the defence and security forces about small arms and light weapons was organized by the National Commission in security triangles 5 and 6 of the International Conference on the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Region. It addressed the dangers of the proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons as well as the need for strict border control.

113. As for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process being implemented under the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 21 June 2008, there has been considerable progress, since out of the 8,000 former combatants from five political-military groups who signed the Agreement, over 4,700 have already been disarmed and demobilized in the northwest of the country, with 3,558 weapons collected. The next stage of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process will address former combatants in the north central and north-eastern areas.

114. With regard to the database, the defence and security forces now have an electronic marking machine provided by the Regional Centre to enable better monitoring and control of small arms and light weapons.

115. Concerning the reform of the security sector, which also includes the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the fight against small arms and light weapons, short-term activities in security sector reform, executed exclusively with State budget funds, have produced results that were commended by a team of international evaluators. Medium-term reforms are included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper — second generation and will be implemented as part of a consolidated national strategy for security sector reform. The Standing Technical Secretariat requested assistance from the Security Institutions Unit of BINUCA in the consolidation of this strategy.

116. With regard to disarmament, the Republic of the Congo has conducted one operation during the March to November 2011 period, which led to the collection of 746 firearms, 54 bladed weapons and 113,420 munitions and explosives.

117. Nevertheless, a final campaign is planned, after which the end of disarmament operations in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in the Congo will be officially declared.

118. The Government of the Republic of the Congo is committed to combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in its territory.

119. The Government of Burundi adopted a national action plan 2011-2015 to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and for civilian

disarmament, which was officially launched by His Excellency the First Vice-President of the Republic on 23 September 2011.

120. The campaign to collect weapons still in the possession of civilians is ongoing. Since the Sao Tome meeting, 144 rifles, 534 grenades and 45,568 cartridges have been collected. Moreover, four awareness-raising workshops on gender and small arms and light weapons have been held, 47 per cent of national police weapons have been marked and three modern armouries equipped with racks for proper storage of weapons owned by the State have been built.

121. Lastly, the Committee welcomed the progressive establishment and launch of operations of the Small Arms and Light Weapons Unit in the ECCAS Secretariat. It welcomed the activities already executed, in particular the drafting and publication of the "Practical Guide to the Kinshasa Convention for Parliamentarians", as well as the technical and financial support provided to the Central African Action Network on Small Arms for the convening of its first regular general assembly in Bangui from 30 November to 3 December 2011.

122. The Committee listened with interest to a presentation by the Network (see attachment II).

- **Briefing by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs**

123. The Committee followed with interest the briefing by the Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa on the latest international developments in the area of disarmament and arms control. The briefing focused on weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and conventional weapons.

124. In that context, and with regard to conventional weapons, the Committee took note of the fact that in September 2011, UNREC, in collaboration with the African Union and the Government of Togo, held a meeting of government experts on the African strategy on small arms and light weapons and the African common position on the Arms Trade Treaty.

125. Furthermore, the United Nations was preparing to hold a preparatory meeting on the Arms Trade Treaty from 13 to 17 February 2012, in advance of the conference of Member States planned for New York from 2 to 27 July 2012, as well as the review conference on progress in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

126. The issue of securing stockpiles of conventional weapons remains a major concern for the international community. A large amount of the ammunition circulating among non-governmental actors seems to have been diverted from government security forces — proof of the urgent need to better secure ammunition stockpiles. Under the UN Safer*G*uard programme, the United Nations has developed a technical guide on international munitions for better management and security of conventional ammunition stockpiles.

127. In connection with the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba making Africa a nuclear-weapon-free zone, the Committee was informed that the African Union had established the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, headquartered in South Africa. The African Union Commission had also requested UNREC to

provide training for the 15 members of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy. All the States of Central Africa have signed this Treaty and five (Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda) have ratified it.

128. The Director of UNREC also informed the Committee of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1977 (2011) on 20 April 2011. This resolution extends the mandate of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) for 10 years, until April 2021, and reiterates the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) relating to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. He drew attention to the low number of national reports submitted by the Central African States in implementation of that resolution.

129. The Committee also urged UNREC to continue providing its various forms of assistance to African States to help them harmonize their national laws on small arms and light weapons, develop training modules for security forces on the subject of arms control, and design and develop trade management software and databases on national laws and regulations concerning firearms.

VII. Promotion of peace and combating insecurity and crime in Central Africa

• Maritime piracy in Central Africa

130. The Committee reiterated its concern at the continued acts of maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and strongly condemned them. It welcomed the steps taken by ECCAS, ECOWAS and the United Nations to coordinate activities to counter these acts, in particular by holding an international conference on the issue in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

131. In that regard, it took note of the technical meeting planned for 14 to 16 February 2012 in Cotonou among representatives of ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the West and Central African Maritime Organization, the International Maritime Organization, the African Union and the United Nations.

132. The Committee expressed its particular gratitude for the support of the United States of America, Gabon and Nigeria for the adoption by the United Nations Security Council at its 6645th meeting of resolution 2018 (2011) establishing a framework to combat acts of maritime piracy committed off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. The Committee was pleased that this resolution was in keeping with the strategy for securing the vital maritime interests of the ECCAS members of the Gulf of Guinea Commission, and was based on the principles of COPAX in harmony with the concerns of ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

133. The Committee was also pleased that the United Nations Secretary-General had sent an evaluation mission from 7 to 24 November 2011 to examine the threat posed by acts of piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea and to seek the best means to put an end to that phenomenon.

134. This multisectoral mission travelled to Cotonou, then to Abuja to meet with ECOWAS representatives, and next to Libreville and Luanda to meet with representatives of ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission respectively.

135. The Committee took note of the tour of member States of ECCAS made by its Secretary-General to promote the implementation of the strategy to combat maritime

piracy in Central Africa. The Committee reiterated its recommendation to the ECCAS Secretariat and member States to accelerate the implementation of that strategy, including the establishment of the Central African Regional Centre for Maritime Security, the Multi-national Coordination Centres and the Maritime Operations Centres as soon as possible.

136. The Committee remains seized of the question and awaits the report and recommendations from this mission.

137. In addition, the Committee followed with interest the address by the head of the delegation of Cameroon, on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, concerning maritime piracy. That address reaffirmed the information contained in the previous statements by Cameroon on that subject.

138. The delegation of Gabon made a statement during the consideration of this item to report on its membership in the Security Council during 2010-2011. It reported in detail about the measures taken by the Council to combat the LRA, as well as maritime piracy and security.

- **Illegal exploitation of natural resources**

139. The States took note of the information paper drafted by UNREC on the initiatives taken in Africa and elsewhere to combat the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including the Final Declaration of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region held on 15 December 2010 in Lusaka. They reaffirmed that this phenomenon has a true negative impact on peace and security in Central Africa and affects several areas.

140. They stated that the illegal exploitation of natural resources had financed the conflicts that had taken place in the region, particularly in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

141. The Committee welcomed the initiatives taken at the international and subregional levels to monitor the problem. In particular, it encouraged States members to continue to give priority importance to the implementation of a certain number of instruments: the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region; the Regional Programme of Action for Economic Development and Regional Integration; the proposal concerning the Regional Mechanism for Natural Resource Certification; the Conakry Declaration signed by 17 organizations at the Regional Seminar on the Exploitation of Natural Resources and Rights of Riparian Communities which took place in Conakry from 13 to 15 March 2011, on the initiative of the International Trade Centre for Development and Global Rights.

142. The Committee also expressed appreciation for the bilateral efforts made by some member States and welcomed the commitment of the European Union, which had signed three bilateral voluntary agreements with Ghana (2009), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010) and Cameroon (2010) for the purpose of guaranteeing the legal origins of wood products imported into the European Union, in order to combat illegal exports.

VIII. Impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa

143. The States took note of the report drafted by UNREC on the impact of climate change on peace and security in Central Africa. There was an exchange of views

among States on this phenomenon, which represents a real threat to institutional stability and public tranquillity.

144. The Committee expressed concern at the degradation of drinking water resources, the decline in food production, the increasing number of storms and floods, migrations, longer and more severe dry seasons, irregular and torrential rainfall, flooding, landslides, deforestation, etc., which are weakening the stability of States.

145. In addition, the Committee welcomed the initiatives and processes established in recent years by States, international institutions or donors to address these issues.

146. The States reaffirmed the importance of the Central African Forests Commission, the Observatory for the Forests of Central Africa, the Congo Basin Forests and Climate Change Adaptation, Organization for the Conservation of African Wildlife, the Conference on Humid and Dense Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa and the Central Africa Regional Programme for the Environment.

IX. Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/189

147. The Committee followed with interest the presentation made by the Gabonese delegation on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/189 entitled "International Widows' Day".

148. Under General Assembly resolution 65/189, "International Widows' Day" is henceforth observed on 23 June each year.

149. The rights of this social group as well as those of orphans, although guaranteed by some Constitutions or laws (penal codes and civil codes, inter alia) and several international conventions, in particular human rights instruments (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of the Child), continue to be negatively affected, and those groups suffer repeated mistreatment and dispossession in many States.

150. The fight for recognition of the rights of these social groups remains a concern of the international community.

151. Gabon, which initiated this resolution, along with the international community, observed 23 June 2011 as the first "International Widows' Day", under the patronage of Ms. Sylvia Bongo Odimba, First Lady of Gabon.

152. In New York, events included an art exhibition by the renowned artist Yoko Ono at United Nations Headquarters, attended by representatives of UN-Women Michelle Bachelet and Monika Bihlmaier, its Director and Africa programme specialist, respectively. A conference organized by the First Lady and Michelle Bachelet brought together such prominent guests as Lord Raj Loomba, creator of the Loomba Foundation, a British charitable organization that has been campaigning for widows since 1997, and its President, Cherie Blair, wife of the former British Prime Minister; Amir Dossal, Executive Director of the United Nations Office for Partnerships, and Ban Soon-taek, wife of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

153. The conference, chaired by Gillian Tett of the *Financial Times*, was also attended by experts, representatives of diplomatic missions, United Nations agencies, international organizations and the media.

154. In Libreville, the First Lady, in the presence of Ms. Cherie Blair and Ms. Diana Ofwona, Regional Director of UN-Women for Central Africa, and Lord Loomba, observed International Widows' Day. It was marked by a symbolic march of solidarity to draw the attention of the public to the importance of the day; the opening of the "Mbandja" centre with the goal of building capacity in Gabonese civil society to provide support and advice to individuals affected and made vulnerable by personal tragedies, such as widows; the holding of a symposium where experts highlighted the situation of widows in Gabon and took steps to strengthen existing legislation in that area; the establishment of the "Akassi" mechanism to assist vulnerable individuals through granting microcredits that allowed them to create income-generating activities and provide a livelihood. A guided tour of a crafts fair featuring items produced by women also took place to mark the Day.

155. It was noted that the observance of the Day was in the early stages. The following year States would once again gather to evaluate progress and continue their noble efforts to help widows and orphans.

X. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women, peace and security, and of General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

156. The Committee reaffirmed the complementary nature of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) as well as General Assembly resolution 65/69, and emphasized that these resolutions are essential tools for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and for peacebuilding and reconstruction in Central Africa.

157. In that connection, the Committee noted with great interest the communication from the Central African Republic concerning the incorporation of the gender dimension and involvement of women in the promotion of peace, security and disarmament.

158. In the Central African Republic, women had played an important role in the resolution of the various military and political crises the country had experienced. Although it had adhered to the relevant conventions and United Nations resolutions, the Central African Republic must make further efforts to include women in the decision-making process. In that regard, a strategy and plan of action had been developed that were designed to involve Central African women in structures for decision-making and conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to foster their financial independence.

159. The Committee also emphasized the need to establish national plans of action within member States. In that connection, it requested UNOCA to assist member States in developing and adopting national plans of action.

XI. Briefing by bodies with observer status with the Committee

160. The Committee noted with interest the briefing by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) and welcomed its contribution to the efforts to strengthen peace and security in that country.

161. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the quality of support that BINUCA had provided to the Central African Republic under its mandate since its establishment. It welcomed the efforts in the areas of electoral reform, mediation and the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the Government and the political and military groups present in the country.

162. The Committee encouraged BINUCA to continue its support for initiatives aimed at the consolidation of peace and reconciliation through the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and security sector reform, as well as the restoration of State authority and the promotion of the rule of law, in order to lay the foundations for sustainable development in the Central African Republic.

163. The Committee heard with interest the presentation of the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, which was celebrating its tenth anniversary in 2011. It expressed appreciation for the manner in which the Centre was working towards its goals.

164. The Committee noted that past or ongoing conflicts pose enormous challenges to the stability of the States of the subregion, especially in the areas of human rights, democracy and administration of justice.

165. The Committee further noted that the realization of economic, social and cultural rights remained a major challenge throughout the countries of the subregion, to the extent that it could prevent the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Moreover, discrimination and marginalization, including discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, health, social status or political affiliation and nationality, continue to be a persistent source of concern in the subregion, where population movements caused by conflicts and economic difficulties have further reinforced discrimination against migrant workers and their families.

166. The Committee also noted that despite the high number of ratifications of international and regional human rights treaties, their implementation in the subregion remains very uneven, given the general context of structural weaknesses of States and civil society organizations.

167. The Committee recommended that member States as well as other stakeholders should take all necessary measures to implement the principle instruments for the promotion and protection of human rights.

168. The Committee again encouraged the Centre to continue its assistance to intergovernmental organizations in the subregion, State institutions and civil society organizations in the area of human rights and democracy in Central Africa.

169. The Committee also heard with great interest the presentation by the African Union on its peace and security activities, particularly those established for the countries of Central Africa. In that connection, the Committee noted that the

countries of Central Africa, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad in particular, are an important item on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council.

170. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the recent combined presidential and legislative elections had revealed just how fragile the peace remained. These elections should allow peace to be consolidated, national reconciliation to be strengthened, the democratic process to be pursued and the foundations for sustainable economic and social development to be laid.

171. In the Central African Republic, an atmosphere of calm continues to prevail following the signing of the ceasefire agreement between the Government and the CPJP, the final rebel movement that has not yet joined the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and following the agreement between the latter and the UFDR, whose attacks last September resulted in many victims and contributed to the degradation in the humanitarian situation in the country. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is also moving forward despite the delays experienced to date. Nevertheless, it is to be deplored that rebels led by General Baba Ladé have come in to the country from Chad and continue to commit reprisals against the people. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform programmes deserve particular attention by the Government and the international community in order to accelerate the process and allow the country to meet these security challenges.

172. With regard to Chad, the restoration of normal relations between Chad and Sudan nearly three years ago has allowed a glimpse of the possibility of sustainable peace. However, the effects of the Sudanese crisis, not only in Darfur but also the strained relations between South Sudan and Sudan, continue to have a negative impact on Chad and on the Central Africa region as a whole.

173. The Committee noted with concern the actions of the LRA, which continues to ravage the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, causing great loss of human life, rapes, kidnappings and mass displacements of population.

174. The African Union has recently taken appropriate measures through the appointment of Mr. José Madeira of Mozambique as Special Envoy, the imminent establishment of a joint coordination mechanism and a regional intervention force with a mandate to strengthen operational capacity in countries affected by LRA atrocities; creation of an environment conducive to the stabilization of affected areas freed from LRA atrocities, and facilitation of the transport of humanitarian assistance to the affected areas.

175. The African Union is continuing its partnership with the European Union under the programme to facilitate peace in Africa, in particular for support to the activities of the ECCAS peacebuilding mission.

176. With regard to the planned disengagement of this mission, the African Union is in the process of studying the possibility of strengthening the liaison office in Bangui to accompany the disengagement process with civil and political activities in order better to prepare for the withdrawal of the mission.

177. The problem as a whole is summarized in the Continental Peace and Security Architecture, a component of which remains the regional brigades of the African Standby Force, in which Central Africa is actively involved.

178. The latest Amani Africa cycle, held in Addis Ababa with participation from the subregion, gave a comprehensive overview of this continental approach to questions of peace and security.

179. The African Union will continue to support the efforts being made in the countries of the subregion, with a view to strengthening the democratic process and creating the conditions for sustainable peace.

180. The Committee also followed with interest the presentation by UNOCA on its activities since its establishment on 2 March 2011 in Libreville, Gabon. In that regard, the Committee took note of its new responsibilities, in particular those having to do with the Committee Secretariat and the coordination of United Nations system activities in countries affected by the actions of the LRA. The Committee was informed of the courtesy visits made by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Central Africa and head of UNOCA to the countries of the subregion, as well as the contacts established with representatives of organizations in the subregion and other relevant partners in Central Africa.

181. During those visits, questions of peace and security affecting the subregion were emphasized. Those questions include cross-border insecurity, the circulation of small arms and light weapons, trafficking in persons, child labour, the threat of terrorism, particularly from Boko Haram and Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, the impact of the situation in Libya on the subregion, maritime piracy and insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the harmful consequences of the actions of armed groups for the civilian population, in particular the LRA, election-related violence, etc.

182. The Committee was informed of the seminar organized by UNOCA on 10 and 11 October 2011 in Libreville on the topic "The work of the United Nations in Central Africa: strengthening subregional efforts for peace and security", which brought together the representatives of the Secretary-General and the resident coordinators of the subregion.

183. The Committee welcomed the UNOCA seminar, which had provided food for thought on the way in which the various United Nations system bodies could harmonize their activities in the areas of peace, security, development and the stability of the subregion.

184. Special emphasis was placed on the Committee's operations, taking into account the relevant provisions of the Libreville Declaration concerning the financial contributions of member States.

185. The Committee took note of the briefing by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on the strategic framework of its priority activities in the area of combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the subregion. The briefing focused on six main points.

186. The first point had to do with building the institutional capacity of the ECCAS Secretariat, public institutions in signatory States of the Kinshasa Convention and civil society organizations in Central Africa under the Action Network for Small Arms in Central Africa. The second dealt with advocacy and awareness-raising among Governments and the people regarding weapons-related dangers; the third

priority of ECCAS was the elaboration of educational tools on the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

187. The fourth point concerned training for the main stakeholders: the armed and security forces, national commissions, parliamentarians, governmental experts and non-governmental organizations working in the field of disarmament and arms control. The fifth priority had to do with the development of operational mechanisms for the benefit of States in the subregion, for instance: marking, tracing, brokerage, exchange of information, management and security of stockpiles, registration, collection and destruction of arms. Lastly, the sixth area for ECCAS intervention was the strengthening of international cooperation and development of many-sided strategic partnerships.

XII. Report by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on the institutional evolution of subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, including ratification of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and of non-aggression and mutual assistance agreements, and the Central Africa multinational force as well as the development of strategic partnerships

188. The Committee decided to defer the consideration of this item to its thirty-fourth meeting.

XIII. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: Implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

189. The Committee welcomed the contributions to its Trust Fund by the Republic of Angola, the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. Delegations then participated in an exchange of views and were encouraged by the Committee to make their respective contributions on a regular basis. The Committee also called on other United Nations Member States and donors to make financial contributions to the Committee's Trust Fund.

XIV. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

190. The Committee took note of the Secretariat proposals for the preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which were adopted by the meeting of ambassadors of member States in November 2011 in New York. The celebration, which would take place at the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee in December 2012, would include a solemn observance preceded by two days of expert meetings on the topic "Two decades of peacebuilding in Central Africa: the contribution and perspectives of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa".

191. The Committee suggested that a preparatory committee composed of members of the bureau and representatives of UNOCA and the host country should be established. The Committee Secretariat would provide the technical coordination for the preparations under the leadership of the Chair of the preparatory committee, which would also address the matter of financing for the observance.

192. The Republic of the Congo would host the activities in commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

XV. Place and date of the next meeting

193. The Committee decided to hold its thirty-fourth ministerial meeting in Bujumbura, Republic of Burundi.

194. The Secretariat would inform member States of the exact dates in due course.

XVI. Other matters

195. The Committee took note of the transfer of the duties of Secretariat of the Committee from the Regional Centre to UNOCA.

196. In that connection, it commended the work of UNREC over the past years which had allowed the Committee to achieve convincing results. It took the opportunity to express its warmest gratitude to Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, Director of UNREC, who had served with efficiency and devotion as the Secretary of the Committee.

197. The Committee also took note of the appointment of Mr. Paul Goa Zoumanigui, Chief Policy Adviser and head of the policy section of UNOCA as Secretary of the Committee and offered him its full support.

XVII. Adoption of the report of the thirty-third ministerial meeting

198. The Committee adopted the present report on 9 December 2011.

C. Expression of thanks

The following expression of thanks was read out:

We, representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered on the occasion of the thirty-third ministerial meeting, from 5 to 9 December 2011 in Bangui, Central African Republic;

Reaffirm our attachment to the ideals of peace, stability and security that are so necessary for our respective peoples and for the socio-economic development of our subregion;

Welcome the efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively, to promote peace, security, stability and development;

Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust that has prevailed throughout our work;

Express our sincere thanks and our profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. François Bozize, President of the Central African Republic, and to the Government and people of the Central African Republic, for the warm and fraternal welcome we have received during our stay in the Central African Republic."

Bangui, 9 December 2011

Attachment I

Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa

Preamble

The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Considering that certain Central African countries bordering North Africa are suffering the consequences of cross-border insecurity and armed violence,

Considering also the fragility of State institutions and the lack of the requisite technical and financial means to address international terrorism,

In the light of the determination of the States of Central Africa to strengthen security along their borders in order to combat organized crime effectively,

Having regard to the need to combat such violence, including violence against women, as set forth in Security Council resolutions 1820 (2008) and 1888 (2009),

Noting that extremist rebel movements are linked to terrorist groups through business networks,

Guided by Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) adopted on 28 September 2001, 1540 (2004) adopted on 28 April 2004 and 1977 (2011) adopted on 20 April 2011, on the non-proliferation of weapons and their possession by non-State actors,

Building on the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, General Assembly resolution 60/288 and African Union decision AU/Dec.311 (XV), adopted by the African Union Summit at Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010,

Also building on the provisions of the statute of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa recommending cooperation in the settlement of disputes,

Recalling such regional instruments as the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative and the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative,

ADOPTS this road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa.

Aim

The road map will contribute to the strengthening of customs, military, police, economic and social cooperation pursuant to the bilateral and multilateral agreements and institutional mechanisms of the subregion.

Implementation

The road map will be implemented at the national, Community and international levels.

National level

- Reduction in external factors linked to terrorism: poverty, corruption;
- Restoration and strengthening of political and administrative authority throughout our territories;
- Strengthening of controls at land borders;
- Safeguarding and enhancing financial oversight in connection with economic activities, in particular investment in the mining sector and trade;
- Identification of front companies established in partnership with nationals;
- Validation of the financing and supply chain for certain products;
- Monitoring the origin and movement of funds;
- Strengthening intelligence services;
- Controlling the possession and use of weapons;
- Strengthening the capabilities of the security forces in implementation of the laws on the carrying of weapons.

Community level

- Increased cooperation between States;
- Extension of the operational scope of this road map to other neighbouring States that are not members of the Committee;
- Establishment of a common legal instrument on measures to prevent and counter terrorism and on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction within the Community;
- Envisaging security as a component of public policy and governance;
- Strengthening of information exchange between the intelligence services of member States.

International cooperation

- The Committee requests the support of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and the international community in implementing this road map;
- The Committee invites its member States to strengthen international cooperation with other States and relevant institutions with valid experience in counter-terrorism and non-proliferation, including the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, based in Algiers, Algeria.

Done at Bangui

8 December 2011

Attachment II

Statement at the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms

I wish to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you for having invited us here today. It is a token of recognition that, we trust, marks the beginning of a fruitful and constructive dialogue between civil society and the Governments of Central Africa on the important and delicate question of arms control and disarmament. You will share our belief that this dialogue will allow us to combine our efforts to resolve the problem of small arms and light weapons and their deleterious impact on the development of our subregion.

We endorse the analyses of the sociopolitical and security contexts in the subregion made by the government experts, a framework which inspires our commitment to control small arms and light weapons.

Under the leadership of the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), civil society organizations in Central Africa have been involved in the formulation of the Kinshasa Convention.

In October 2009 at Lomé, Women in Alternative Action Cameroon represented civil society in the subregion at the meeting of independent experts to review the preliminary draft of the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Following the twenty-ninth ministerial meeting of your Committee, held at N'Djamena in November 2009, the civil society organizations members of the International Action Network on Small Arms took an active part in consultations held at the national level with a view to enriching the Convention.

At the thirtieth meeting of the Committee, at Kinshasa in April 2010, where the Convention was adopted, Central African civil society participated through Women of the Media for Justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and addressed States members of the Committee at the biennial preparatory meeting on the United Nations Implementation Plan for the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, organized in conjunction with the thirtieth meeting of the Committee.

In September 2010 at Lomé, the International Action Network on Small Arms programme manager for Africa played an active part in the meeting of experts to consider the Implementation Plan for the Kinshasa Convention.

In response to the urgent need for coordinated action at the subregional level to combat the proliferation and illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons, the Central African civil society organizations members of the International Action Network on Small Arms, which had long acted alone in isolation without regional coordination, in October 2010 at Libreville, Gabon, joined with other actors in Africa to establish the Central African Action Network on Small Arms with a view to contributing to human security in the Central African subregion.

The Central African Action Network on Small Arms may be young, but it brings together organizations with proven expertise in advocacy and activities to control small arms and light weapons. In the year since its establishment, in addition to building a collective dynamic and conducting capacity-building activities, it has been present at the major meetings on small arms and light weapons and the Arms Trade Treaty. Through its members it has also conducted a number of activities in the various countries of the subregion. Among others, I might mention participation in the formulation of the Kinshasa Convention, grass-roots consultations on the Convention during this year's Global Week of Action against Gun Violence, and participation in the work of the United Nations Preparatory Committee for the Arms Trade Treaty in New York, in the training of African women leaders in reform of the security sector and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, in the work of the African Union on the adoption of a common position on the Arms Trade Treaty and the African Union plan of action on small arms and light weapons, and in the subregional seminar on raising awareness of the Kinshasa Convention attended by government experts, parliamentarians and civil society organizations of Central Africa.

While I have the floor I wish to make a solemn appeal to the member States of the Committee to facilitate recognition of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms in their respective countries and to integrate the member organizations of the Network in the various frameworks for consultation at the national and regional levels, and to include them in national, subregional and international meetings on the question of the control of weapons and disarmament.

We need to consider the contribution of civil society to these efforts, it being clearly understood that the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is having an increasing impact on communities and individuals. Efforts to control small arms and light weapons necessitate a multisectoral approach encompassing a broad range of measures and synergy between key actors, including civil society organizations.

Participation by the Action Network is pursuant to the Kinshasa Convention, article 19, paragraph 2, of which relates to the need to involve civil society in developing awareness-raising programmes intended to promote a culture of peace, and article 29, paragraph 3, of which provides for the establishment of a civil society network in Central Africa on small arms and light weapons. Through our participation we wish to work for ownership of the Convention by the peoples of Central Africa.

Given the situation with regard to small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, ratification and implementation of the Kinshasa Convention is becoming a matter of urgency. The recent massacre in Gatumba, Burundi, and the rapes at gunpoint in the Central African Republic and in the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are clear indications of this. The Action Network appeals to the State parties to undertake and accelerate this process.

We welcome the continually reaffirmed desire of the States of Central Africa to see the arms trade regulated, as stated in the Sao Tome Declaration on a Central African Common Position on the Arms Trade Treaty, issued on 16 March 2011 at the thirty-second meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. This common position is based on the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their

Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly. We urge all the States of Central Africa to commit without delay and without reservation to a robust and binding arms trade treaty regulating small arms and light weapons.

For its part, the Central African Action Network on Small Arms stands ready to contribute, in collaboration with the States of Central Africa, to the formulation of a rigorous and muscular arms trade treaty and to work for its ratification and implementation.

In concluding, I wish to thank the Government of the Central African Republic for having facilitated the work of the regular General Assembly of the Central African Action Network on Small Arms at Bangui from 30 November to 3 December 2011.

United Nations S/2012/160

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 March 2012

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1886 (2009), 1941 (2010) and 2005 (2011), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) every six months. The report covers the period from 1 September 2011 to 29 February 2012.

II. Major developments

2. During the reporting period, the political situation in the country was dominated by preparations for the presidential, parliamentary and local council elections, which are scheduled to be held on 17 November 2012. The period also witnessed an increase in political tensions mainly involving supporters of the ruling All People's Congress (APC) and the major opposition party, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). There were, however, some positive socio-economic developments in the country, primarily as a result of the increased exploitation of the country's abundant natural resources, notably minerals.

A. Political developments

3. Political tensions surrounding the 2012 elections increased during the reporting period. On 9 September 2011, a convoy carrying Brigadier Julius Maada Bio (Rtd), the SLPP presidential candidate, was attacked by APC supporters in Bo, in the southern region, resulting in injuries to him. On the same day, SLPP supporters set fire to the APC district office and two residential properties belonging to APC supporters in Bo. As the Sierra Leone Police attempted to control the situation, one person was killed, and several people, including the Chair of the ruling party's regional women's wing, were injured in the violence. On 10 September, the President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Bai Koroma, condemned the violence and announced the establishment of an independent investigation panel composed of civil society organizations in Sierra Leone and the security services to investigate the incident. On 31 September, the panel concluded that supporters of both parties were complicit in the violence. The panel also made recommendations

Please recycle

aimed at improving the work of the police and fostering a stronger sense of accountability among political parties. Shortly after the submission of the panel's report, criminal proceedings were initiated against supporters of both parties who were accused of being involved in the incident.

4. Following the attack on 9 September, the Inspector General of Police imposed a ban on all political party processions and rallies in the country. The ban was lifted on 12 December, after the signing of a memorandum of understanding by APC, the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), the People's Liberation Party (PLP) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM), which committed the political parties to engaging in regular consultations with the police; deploying marshals during political party processions; and strictly adhering to the code of conduct for political parties and the Public Order Act. SLPP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) did not sign the memorandum because the Inspector General of Police had chaired the meeting at which the document was signed, instead of the head of the Political Parties Registration Commission. They also insisted that the police had no legal authority to ban political party processions and rallies.

5. On 14 January 2012, clashes erupted again between supporters of APC and SLPP during a local council by-election in Freetown. The police fired tear gas to disperse supporters from both parties who were throwing stones in the streets. The incident resulted in injuries to four people. During those incidents, UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the Political Parties Registration Commission, maintained close contact with the leadership of SLPP and APC, urging them to encourage their supporters to exercise maximum restraint in the course of their political activities. The United Nations also provided logistical support to the panel members investigating the 9 September incident.

6. In his address at the fifth State Opening of Parliament, on 7 October 2011, President Koroma highlighted the achievements of his administration over the past four years and outlined his vision for the long-term development and transformation of Sierra Leone. He underlined the fact that SLPP, APC and PMDC, the third party represented in Parliament, were all partners in the transformation of the country and had much in common. The President gave assurances of the Government's determination to ensure free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections in 2012. However, parliamentarians from SLPP and PMDC boycotted the State Opening of Parliament, protesting, among other things, against the ban on political processions and rallies imposed by the police following the political violence on 9 September in Bo.

7. On 7 February, the SLPP presidential candidate issued a press statement accusing the ruling party, APC, of rearming and deploying ex-combatants to the southern and eastern provinces, which are the strongholds of SLPP, in order to increase votes for the ruling party and foment violence. The Government denied the allegations and accused SLPP of inciting violence. On 10 February, the police launched an investigation into allegations made by SLPP and invited Brigadier Bio (Rtd) to substantiate the allegations contained in his press statement in order to facilitate the investigations.

8. From 20 January to 1 February, the Government of Sierra Leone held a national conference on the development and transformation of the country. In his statement to the conference, President Koroma called on Sierra Leonean citizens to maximize the opportunities presented to the country through increased mining

revenues. At the conclusion of the conference, declarations were adopted on key thematic areas, such as political and economic governance; private sector development; natural resource management; support of the Sierra Leonean diaspora; accountability; and frameworks for the exploitation of natural resources and allocation of state resources. The SLPP did not participate in the event, citing, among other reasons, the conference's proximity to the elections. The United Nations provided funding and technical support for the conference.

Preparations for the 2012 elections

Voter registration

9. In preparation for the elections, some 800 biometric voter registration kits were procured by the National Electoral Commission, with assistance from an election basket fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The upcoming elections mark the first time voter registration in Sierra Leone will be undertaken using the biometric system. The Commission conducted a pilot test of the system from 1 to 3 November 2011 and also undertook sensitization programmes throughout the country to raise awareness of the biometric system. The Commission also held a series of meetings between 28 October 2011 and 20 January 2012 with all political parties to elaborate on registration procedures and other technical issues associated with the biometric system. The United Nations assisted the Commission in developing training manuals and guides for administering the biometric system.

10. The voter registration exercise began on 23 January 2012 and will end on 26 March 2012. There are 2,998 registration centres distributed among 394 wards, and the registration period in each ward is 15 days. The number of registered voters for the elections is expected to be 3.2 million, which represents an estimated increase of about 700,000 over the 2007 elections. As at 4 March, 1,888,028 persons had registered using the biometric system.

Electoral legal reform

11. The electoral legal reform process, which began in March 2011, continued during the reporting period. A technical committee composed of representatives of the Law Reform Commission, the Political Parties Registration Commission, the National Electoral Commission and UNIPSIL completed a review of the recommendations made by political parties, national stakeholders and civil society during an electoral legal reform workshop held in March 2011. The reviewed recommendations relate to the announcement of dates for public elections, eligibility criteria for election to the office of President, the tenure of Commissioners, election petitions and decisions and the nullification of votes. In addition, the technical committee consolidated all electoral legislation into one single compendium for ease of reference. The proposed electoral legislation is expected to be approved by Parliament in March 2012.

12. While most political parties have expressed agreement with the main proposals for electoral legal reform, SLPP has challenged the provision that would grant powers to the National Electoral Commission to nullify votes. The absence of legislation on the nullification of votes generated much controversy during the 2007 run-off presidential elections and was consequently a subject of contention between the National Electoral Commission and SLPP; against that background, UNIPSIL

and the Political Parties Registration Commission held several rounds of consultations with SLPP during the reporting period, with a view to arriving at a consensus on the proposals for the nullification of votes. The discussions remain inconclusive, with SLPP maintaining its position.

Election Steering Committee

13. During the period under review, my Executive Representative and the Minister for Finance and Economic Development co-chaired meetings of the Election Steering Committee, which were attended by international development partners and representatives of national election management bodies. The meetings were aimed at ensuring the proper coordination of arrangements for the elections. At the meeting held on 15 September, the Government announced that its contributions to the elections would be approximately $18 million.

Election security arrangements

14. In view of the potential risks of electoral violence and other security-related challenges, national security sector agencies in Sierra Leone developed, with assistance from UNIPSIL, a comprehensive threat assessment and an integrated election strategy, which will guide their operations during the electoral process. In addition, UNDP and UNIPSIL assisted in the preparation of training modules for the police on a range of issues, including the electoral law and applicable standards of professionalism in the conduct of their duties. The police also completed a train-the-trainer programme.

Support to civil society, non-State actors and the implementation of the joint communiqué of 2 April

15. The engagement of civil society and other non-State actors in creating an enabling environment for the peaceful conduct of elections is critical in the lead-up to the elections. To that end, and with support from the Peacebuilding Fund, UNIPSIL developed a non-State actors project that seeks to promote dialogue and participation among political actors, while enhancing the capacity of key non-State actors in the areas of conflict mitigation and resolution. The project's activities have included periodic meetings of district code of conduct monitoring committees, composed of representatives of political parties, civil society, security agencies and local authorities. The committees have provided a mechanism to anticipate and resolve issues related to the electoral process and have facilitated interaction among the political parties, which has led to a reduction in tensions in several communities. On 24 January, a national meeting of committee members was convened in Freetown to take stock of and consolidate the gains made by the committees at the district level.

16. In order to boost efforts aimed at instilling the shared values of political tolerance and non-violence, further support from the non-State actors project was provided to the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women's Association. Some 200 members of the Youth Association were also trained by the Political Parties Registration Commission in advocacy and leadership during the reporting period.

17. A number of outreach activities aimed at promoting political dialogue, participation and non-violence were undertaken by UNIPSIL through the non-State

actors project during the reporting period. The joint communiqué signed by SLPP and APC on 2 April 2009 following inter-party violence in March 2009 was widely disseminated throughout the country by means of short films. In addition, Sierra Leonean musicians, under the banner of Artists for Peace, continued to advocate for peace and non-violence through music concerts in various parts of the country.

B. Security developments

18. The overall security situation in Sierra Leone remained relatively calm during the reporting period despite isolated incidents of election-related violence. On 8 September 2011, President Koroma launched a national security exercise and the second security sector review in Freetown. Both activities were designed to raise awareness of the country's national security architecture and identify areas that require further improvement.

19. While there were no reports of organized arms trafficking in Sierra Leone during the reporting period, there were reports of an increase in the illegal trade in shotgun cartridges and the illegal use of locally manufactured shotguns. Both activities need to be monitored closely, especially in the lead-up to the elections. The early adoption of the arms and ammunition bill, which is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, will contribute to national efforts to curb the illegal trade in arms and ammunition. The bill is also in line with the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

C. Economic and social developments and activities of the United Nations country team

20. During the period under review, the economy of Sierra Leone continued to expand. The outlook for the economy in the medium term remains favourable. According to forecasts by the International Monetary Fund, real GDP growth is projected at 5.3 per cent for 2011, and the economy is expected to experience a one-time jump in growth to 51.4 per cent in 2012, owing mainly to the commencement of iron ore production. Economic growth is expected to average 6 per cent from 2013 to 2015. The quantity of iron ore exported by African Minerals Limited, which began exporting in December 2011, is expected to reach 15 million tons in 2012, which will contribute an estimated $57 million to Government revenue.

21. Although the rate of inflation reached a high of 21 per cent in the first half of 2011, preliminary figures show a decline to 16.9 per cent at the end of December 2011, which reflects a tight monetary policy and a relatively stable exchange rate. It should be noted that the Sierra Leone currency, the leone, depreciated relative to the United States dollar by just under 5 per cent in 2011. While fiscal challenges remain, including containment of the wage bill and other current spending, as well as better scheduling of infrastructure spending, anticipated improvements in revenue mobilization will help to keep the overall fiscal deficit at 4.4 per cent of non-iron ore GDP in 2012. The external balance of payments remains favourable, and gross reserves are expected to average about $386 million a year (or the equivalent of three months of imports of non-iron ore goods and services) in 2012 and 2013.

External debt, which is projected at 20 per cent of GDP in 2012, is expected to remain low.

22. Following consultations with the Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced in January that it would invoke, as from 30 June 2012, the "ceased circumstances" clauses of the Geneva Convention and the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa with respect to the 8,188 Liberian refugees still residing in Sierra Leone. Although the invocation will decidedly terminate their refugee status, UNHCR will work with the two Governments concerned to afford the individuals an opportunity to opt for local integration or voluntary repatriation.

23. The Free Health Care Initiative for children under 5 years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers, an initiative supported by the United Nations Children's Fund, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and other donors, has contributed to an increase in the utilization of treatment services, antenatal care and childbirth in health facilities. Child mortality remains high, however, owing mainly to malnutrition, late vaccinations, malaria and diarrhoea. While maternal mortality continues to decline, its prevalence remains relatively high, exacerbated by teenage pregnancy and inadequate access to health services. Gender gaps have significantly narrowed in primary education but persist in secondary schools.

III. Advancing peacebuilding

24. The midterm review of the Joint Vision Strategy was completed in September 2011, following consultations with the Government. The review highlighted the United Nations contribution to the implementation of the Government's Agenda for Change and provided direction towards a programmatic approach that would allow for greater synergies and more flexibility in United Nations interventions. The United Nations country team is finalizing a draft transitional joint vision that will cover 2013 and 2014. That strategy will be implemented through an interim two-year programme cycle (2013-2014) and will take into account the 2012 elections in the country. The longer-term national strategy is expected to be fully developed in 2013. In the meantime, the United Nations system will continue to align its strategy with the sectoral strategies of Government ministries, departments and agencies. Consultations with the Government are ongoing with respect to the transitional joint vision, which focuses on seven programmatic clusters that are aligned with the draft national strategy. The clusters include support to good governance; agriculture and food security; natural resources and disaster management; social protection, child protection, gender and human rights; basic education; health and nutrition; and economic development and employment.

25. From 22 to 29 January, the newly appointed Chair of the Sierra Leone configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Guillermo Rishchynshi (Canada), visited Sierra Leone to assess the progress made in consolidating the peace process and in preparing for the 2012 elections. He held meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including President Koroma, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Finance and Economic Development, Youth Employment and Sports, and Mineral Resources, the Speaker of Parliament, the Youth Commissioner, the country's

electoral management bodies and representatives of political parties, as well as civil society and international development partners. During that visit, the Chair strongly encouraged political parties to work towards the success of the 2012 elections, stressing the primacy of national reconciliation and peaceful political dialogue.

IV. Main risks to peacebuilding

A. Illicit drug trafficking and organized crime

26. The Sierra Leone Transnational Organized Crime Unit continued to make progress in combating drug trafficking and organized crime with the support of its West Africa Coast Initiative partners. The Unit investigated 113 cases involving drug, human and arms trafficking, as well as financial crimes. Furthermore, 68 drug-related cases, 3 cases of financial crimes and 1 case of human trafficking were referred to the courts. Some 112 suspects were indicted and 8 convictions secured during the reporting period.

27. Regarding illicit drugs, in 2011 the Transnational Organized Crime Unit impounded 1,748 kg and destroyed 128 kg of *cannabis sativa* and arrested six suspects on possession- and trafficking-related charges. UNIPSIL provided technical support to the Unit in developing procedures for its operations, in international cooperation and in intelligence gathering. The operational capability of the Unit was also strengthened with training provided by UNIPSIL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on entry tactics and intelligence analysis.

28. During the reporting period, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime conducted an assessment of the national forensic capacity of Sierra Leone and is supporting the construction of a new forensic laboratory to strengthen it.

B. Youth

29. The National Youth Commission was inaugurated by President Koroma on 25 November 2011. The Commission is expected to take the lead in promoting and harmonizing youth development, within the framework of the Ministry of Youth Employment and Sports. It will give voice to young people by serving as a forum that ensures policy coherence and promotes youth interest in Government policies. Youth issues have been prioritized and are being mainstreamed in the draft employment policy, which is expected to be approved by Parliament in 2012.

C. Corruption

30. The 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, released on 1 December 2011, revealed that the ranking of Sierra Leone had improved slightly, from 2.4 points in 2010 to 2.5 points in 2011. This is partially attributable to efforts of the Anti-Corruption Commission, which continues to initiate investigations and prosecute public officials involved in corrupt practices. During the period under review, the Mayor of Freetown, a member of the ruling party, was indicted for alleged acts of corruption. The Mayor has since been suspended from office, pending the outcome of the court proceedings.

31. With assistance from UNDP and funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, the Anti-Corruption Commission established a secretariat to manage the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. The secretariat is also supporting public sector agencies in developing action plans for the implementation of the Strategy. UNDP is also providing support to an initiative by the Commission, civil society and the media to promote the Strategy and monitor its implementation nationwide.

V. Support to democratic institutions

A. National Electoral Commission

32. The National Electoral Commission took several positive initiatives aimed at strengthening national ownership of the electoral process during the period under review. Apart from playing the lead role in defining the parameters for the biometric voter registration and reform of the electoral law, the Commission publicly piloted the biometric voter registration system. Throughout 2011, it administered by-elections without international support.

33. While its capacities have been strengthened over time, the National Electoral Commission still requires international technical support, given the complexity of new elements introduced in the 2012 electoral process, particularly the biometric voter registration system. Such support and constructive engagement by the international community will assist the Commission in overcoming the challenges of managing the 2012 electoral process. During the reporting period, the Commission continued to receive technical and financial assistance from the UNDP-managed election basket fund.

B. Political Parties Registration Commission

34. The Political Parties Registration Commission continues to play an important role in regulating the activities of political parties, especially in ensuring their adherence to the code of conduct for political parties. This task has become even more critical, given the prevailing environment of mutual mistrust among the major political parties. The Commission also plays a lead role in advancing dialogue among the political parties and implementing Peacebuilding Fund projects aimed at supporting political parties, the All Political Parties Youth Association, the All Political Parties Women's Association and the district code monitoring committees. Under the UNIPSIL non-State actor project, the Commission continued to play a key role in implementing programmes to build the conflict mitigation and resolution capacities of political parties, including their women's and youth wings. During the period under review, it received logistical support, including computers, vehicles and office equipment from the UNDP-managed election basket fund.

35. On 5 September 2011, the Political Parties Registration Commission convened a legal reform workshop, during which participants reviewed the Commission's mandate and recommended, inter alia, revisions to the Political Parties Act of 2002 so as to give the Commission statutory authority to enforce the code of conduct for political parties.

36. During the reporting period, the Political Parties Registration Commission approved the registration of four new political parties to participate in the electoral process. These are the United Democratic Movement (UDM), the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP), the Citizen's Democratic Party (CDP) and the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP).

C. Independent Media Commission

37. Given the increasing polarization of the media coverage and political landscape in Sierra Leone ahead of the elections, the Independent Media Commission is expected to play a more proactive role in monitoring the media and ensuring compliance with the code of conduct for the media. During the reporting period, the Commission received capacity-building assistance from the Government and international partners, which further enhanced its ability to monitor radio stations and newspapers to ensure compliance with the media code of ethics. The Commission also provided training for media practitioners on electoral reporting ethics, legal reforms and other obligations of broadcast media under the Sierra Leone media code of practice.

D. Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation

38. The upcoming elections will provide the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation with an opportunity to assert its credentials as a credible and impartial public independent broadcaster. During the reporting period, the Corporation continued its efforts to provide good programming and afford opportunities to all stakeholders to air their views. However, it continued to face administrative and financial management challenges, which were highlighted in a report submitted by a presidential commission of inquiry to President Koroma in November 2011. The report contained recommendations aimed at addressing those deficits, including the need to clarify the powers of the Corporation's Board of Trustees and Management, change the eligibility criteria for membership in the Board and ensure a transparent and competitive recruitment process for senior positions within the Corporation.

39. During the reporting period, transmitters procured by the United Nations were installed at various regional locations in Pujehun and Kono Districts, which will improve the Corporation's outreach. In the meantime, in order to ensure a level playing field in the lead-up to the elections, the Corporation has pledged to provide equal airtime to all political parties during the electoral process.

E. Parliament

40. With the support of the United Nations, the Sierra Leone Parliament has now established eight departments, which were envisaged under the Parliamentary Service Act 2007. In addition, the United Nations provided technical support, including for mapping exercises of interventions by development partners and preparation of the terms of reference for the establishment of the Parliamentary Assistance Coordination Office, which will assist in preventing any duplication of programmes supported by development partners. The United Nations also continues

to support the work of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee by providing training and reference materials for the Parliament's library.

F. Decentralization

41. Efforts to strengthen governance and rule of law institutions at all levels, in particular at the local level, are proceeding satisfactorily. Many challenges remain, however, including those relating to the expected role of national actors at the local level. To address those challenges, a policy framework is being developed by the Government with a view to revising the Local Government Act and the new chieftaincy and traditional administration policy. Those instruments, together with the decentralization policy, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the local councils, district officers, parliamentarians and traditional authorities in the areas of decision-making with regard to development; elections and maintenance of law and order; and local revenue collection and allocation. United Nations support will continue to focus on service delivery programmes; the introduction of a local economic development process; and capacity development for chieftaincy administration.

VI. Human rights and the rule of law

42. Together with the Government, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone and civil society, UNIPSIL participated in the universal periodic review process, which resulted in the adoption of the universal periodic review report on Sierra Leone at the eighteenth session of the Human Rights Council, held in Geneva in September 2011. The Government accepted all 129 recommendations from the review process with the exception of 1 recommendation relating to homosexual and lesbian rights. In addition, UNIPSIL supported the convening of a national conference that reviewed the recommendations from the universal periodic review process and agreed on priorities and strategies for their implementation. Following the adoption of the conference report, the Presidency issued a directive to all ministries and departments to mainstream the recommendations from the universal period review in their programmes.

43. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone also made some progress in the implementation of its mandate. In December 2011, the first five-year renewable term of the Commissioners and the strategic plan for the period 2009-2011 ended. Two of the former Commissioners have since been reappointed to a second term, while the process to fill the other three positions is ongoing. As a result of the engagement of UNIPSIL with civil society and its support to district human rights committees, several chiefdoms have now formed chiefdom human rights subcommittees to promote and protect human rights in rural communities.

44. UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, conducted extensive research and in December 2011 issued a report on the rights of persons with disabilities aimed at supporting Government efforts to implement the Persons with Disability Act 2011. The Government has responded positively to some of the recommendations contained in the report, in particular the need to fast-track the establishment of a national commission for persons with disabilities.

45. During the period under review, the justice sector coordination forums established by UNIPSIL to assist justice sector stakeholders in devising practical strategies for improving justice delivery continued their work, which was aimed at improving detention conditions, securing the release of juveniles detained with adults, fast-tracking the hearing of cases in courts and reducing the number of arbitrary arrests by the police.

VII. Gender issues

46. During the period under review, a gender equality bill containing provisions pertaining to quotas for women recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was drafted by a coalition of women's advocacy groups known as the Women's Social Support Group. The bill, which will be tabled before Parliament, provides that a minimum of 30 per cent of seats in Parliament shall be reserved for women; that one ward in each constituency at the local council level shall be set aside for female candidates; and that political parties shall allocate "safe" seats for female candidates. A 30 per cent quota would also apply to the appointment of senior officials, particularly those at the ministerial and ambassadorial levels, as well as those in parastatal organizations and other Government institutions. The bill was presented to President Koroma on 12 January 2012.

47. United Nations entities took several steps to advance the rights of women and the girl child. UNDP provided assistance to a victim support scheme and to "Saturday courts", which adjudicate sexual and gender-based violence. The United Nations also supported the establishment of mobile courts to adjudicate on cases of sexual and gender-based violence in the southern region of the country. In addition, training was provided to 260 police officers from the Sierra Leone Police Family Support Unit on guidelines for the management of such cases. In December 2011, training programmes on the promotion of the rule of law and the dispensation of justice for women were conducted for 300 local court clerks and 150 paramount chiefs.

48. My Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Margot Wallström, visited Sierra Leone in November 2011. During her interactions with a range of stakeholders, she highlighted the need for more support to survivors of sexual violence, especially in the areas of access to justice and reintegration into society, as well as the need to strengthen the capacity of the judicial system to address sexual violence. On 28 September 2011, the United Nations organized an Open Day, which focused on discussions related to Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). Some 200 women representing peace activists, including Government functionaries, traditional leaders and members of Parliament, attended the meeting.

VIII. Special Court for Sierra Leone

49. At the end of 2011, as a result of difficulties in obtaining voluntary contributions, the Special Court received a subvention from the General Assembly of over $9 million to cover its 2012 budget.

50. The Special Court is awaiting the delivery of the trial judgement concerning the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, at The Hague, which is expected to

take place on 26 April 2012. In addition, two contempt cases against five individuals accused of interfering with witnesses involved in the trial will resume after the delivery of the judgement in the trial of Charles Taylor. The Court continues to make preparations for its transition to the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, the liquidation of its assets and the handover of its site.

IX. Regional cooperation

51. On 13 October 2011, President Koroma visited Guinea and held talks with its President, Alpha Condé, on strengthening relations between the two countries and on regional issues of common interest. In a communiqué issued after the summit, the two Presidents reaffirmed their desire to continue to work together to strengthen the bilateral cooperation existing between the two countries. They also reaffirmed their commitment to expeditiously resolving the Yenga boundary issue through diplomatic means.

X. Observations and recommendations

52. Ten years have passed since the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone officially ended in January 2002. The country has made considerable progress in consolidating its hard-won peace and in laying the foundations for a better future for its citizens. However, it continues to grapple with governance issues and developmental challenges, all of which can be addressed and resolved only in an atmosphere of peace and stability. In this endeavour, the political leaders of the country have the biggest responsibility to nurture and promote a culture of political tolerance and accommodation.

53. The presidential, parliamentary and local council elections planned for 2012 will therefore remain a vital test to assess the level of the consolidation of peace in the country. It also affords an opportunity for all national stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment to the consolidation of democracy in the country. However, recent incidents of political violence in the country continue to raise concerns about the prospects for a peaceful conduct of the 2012 elections. These incidents must not be allowed to escalate any further. Clearly, the ruling party and the opposition party, given their dominant roles in the politics of the country, must put aside partisan political interests in favour of the overriding national interests and development.

54. In this regard, I urge the political parties of Sierra Leone to take ownership of the dialogue process. I appeal to all the political stakeholders in the country, who in the past showed much resilience and resolve to bring an unfortunate past to an end, to once again rise to the challenge of consolidating democratic freedoms in Sierra Leone. It remains my hope that there will be a resumption of dialogue among the parties, geared towards furthering national cohesion and ensuring the peaceful conduct of elections. Nothing can be more urgent in Sierra Leone than the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the country.

55. I commend the Government for the arrest and prosecution of individuals who are implicated in incidents of political violence, irrespective of their affiliation. I call upon the political parties to reaffirm their commitments, which they made in the

joint communiqué of 2 April, and to abide by the code of conduct for political parties. The release of the long-awaited white paper on the Shears-Moses Commission of Inquiry into the March 2009 disturbances and the implementation of the Commission's recommendations would also contribute to lowering the political temperature in the country and building confidence among the political actors of Sierra Leone.

56. On the basis of current economic projections, Sierra Leone is expected to witness increases in its GDP, mostly from the export of its natural resources in the coming years. I welcome these positive developments, which are likely to have a direct impact on improving the livelihoods of the people of Sierra Leone. I commend the Government's efforts to build consensus among national stakeholders on the country's long-term strategic direction through the recently concluded Sierra Leone Conference on Development and Transformation. I am also encouraged by the Government's recent pronouncements to the effect that anticipated revenues will be utilized for the benefit of all Sierra Leoneans.

57. The country's democratic institutions, the National Electoral Commission, the Political Parties Registration Commission, the Independent Media Commission and other institutions, including the Sierra Leone Police and the judiciary, have important responsibilities in ensuring credible and peaceful elections in 2012. In line with the recommendations from the universal periodic review process and in accordance with the joint communiqué of 2 April, I encourage the Government to proceed with the establishment of an Independent Police Complaints Committee, which would reinforce the neutrality and professionalism of the police. I also urge international development partners of Sierra Leone to support the Government in establishing this Committee.

58. The media in Sierra Leone have an important role to play, not only in raising awareness of the electoral process but also in promoting national unity and cohesion. It is important that the Independent Media Commission, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists and other media organizations work together in enhancing the positive role that the media are expected to play before, during and after the 2012 elections. In this regard, efforts to strengthen the revised Media Code of Conduct are essential.

59. I wish to express my appreciation for the continuing support of the Peacebuilding Commission to Sierra Leone and would like to encourage the Commission to intensify its efforts in support of the electoral process in the country, while strengthening its coordination with relevant United Nations departments, funds, agencies and programmes. I also encourage the Commission to provide timely advice to the Security Council, as deemed necessary, for its consideration.

60. On measures to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), I am pleased to note that a strong foundation has been laid for the participation of women in governance in Sierra Leone, through the proposed gender equality bill, which includes key recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I commend the Government and the various women's groups and coalitions for their efforts in this regard and pledge the continuing support of the United Nations in furthering this objective. Preventing violence against women during the electoral period is an important objective that should be pursued by all stakeholders.

61. In conclusion, I would like to thank President Koroma and his Government for their cooperation with UNIPSIL in the implementation of its mandate. I also wish to convey my sincere appreciation to the staff of the United Nations in Sierra Leone for their hard work and dedication, which has contributed to the progress of the country. I thank the international development partners of Sierra Leone and the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for their continued support to the country and the United Nations. Finally, I would like once again to express my deep appreciation to my outgoing Executive Representative, Michael von der Schulenburg, for his full commitment and excellent service in advancing the peacebuilding process and strengthening the presence of the United Nations in Sierra Leone.

Annex to the identical letters dated 15 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

[Original: Arabic]

List of Arab and foreign media organizations that entered Syria during the period from 20 March 2011 to 6 March 2012

1. French news agency Agence France-Presse, journalist Sami Ketz — 24 March 2011
2. AlJazeera English channel, American journalist Cal Perry — 26 March 2011
3. Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, Italian journalist Alix Van Buren — 10 April 2011
4. Lebanese news channel ANB, Zeina Fayad — 26 March 2011
5. Lebanese channel Al Jadeed — 23 March, 28 April, 15 May, 14 June and 9 July 2011
6. Lebanese channel OTV, Maron Nassif — 23 May 2011
7. Lebanese channel NBN, journalist Linda Mashraf — 29 March 2011
8. American network CNN, journalist Hala Gorani — 23 June 2011
9. British channel Sky News, British journalist Kelvin O'Shea — 23 June 2011
10. AlJazeera English channel (Beirut office), journalist Rula Amin — 15 May, 27 June and 14 November 2011
11. American radio NPR, journalist Deborah Amos — 23 June and 5 October 2011
12. Newspaper *The Sunday Times*, British journalist Hala Jaber — April, June and August
13. American newspaper *The Washington Post*, American journalist Liz Sly — 11 July 2011
14. Independent French journalist Pierre Barbancey — 12 July 2011
15. Radio France Info, Beirut-based journalist Valérie Crova — 1 August 2011
16. British channel BBC World, Lebanese journalist Mohamed Ballout — 8 August 2011
17. Channel Rossiya 24, Russian journalist Anastasia Andreevna and the team that accompanied her — 10 August 2011
18. TRT channel — 11 August 2011
19. NTV channel — 11 August 2011
20. Fox channel — 11 August 2011
21. Anatolia news agency — 11 August 2011
22. Cihan news agency — 11 August 2011

23. Reuters news agency — 11 August 2011
24. Newspaper *Al-Zaman* — 11 August 2011
25. French news agency Agence France-Presse, journalist Samy Ketz and the team that accompanied him — 16 August 2011
26. Arabic/Spanish/English-language channel Russia Today, journalist Marianna Belenkaya — 16 August 2011
27. French newspaper *Le Figaro*, journalist Georges Malbrunot — 18 August 2011
28. Italian newspaper *Rinascità*, Italian journalist Matteo Bernabei — 5 September 2011
29. Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, Brazilian journalist Marcelo Ninio — 14 September 2011
30. Iranian newspaper *Mellat-e-Ma*, Iranian journalist Fouad Pur Badi — 15 September 2011
31. Venezuelan channel TeleSUR, led by Venezuelan journalist Javiera Olivares — 17 September 2011
32. Lebanese channel Al-Manar, journalist Hamza al-Hajj Hassan — 19 September 2011
33. Italian magazine *l'Espresso*, Italian journalist Gianni Perrelli — 20 September 2011
34. Italian Radio Radicale, Italian journalist Francesco De Leo — 20 September 2011
35. Italian-Arab Centre, Lebanese journalist Talal Khreis — 20 September 2011
36. British channel BBC World, led by British journalist Lyse Doucet — 25 September 2011
37. Brazilian newspaper *O Estadão de São Paulo*, Brazilian journalist Gustavo Chacra — 30 September 2011
38. Ukrainian channel Enter — 2 October 2011
39. Ukrainian National Television Channel 1— 2 October 2011
40. Ukrainian channel Krila — 2 October 2011
41. Ukrainian channel Tonis — 2 October 2011
42. Ukrainian newspaper *Den* — 2 October 2011
43. Ukrainian newspaper *Kyiv Post* — 2 October 2011
44. Ukrainian channel TRK — 2 October 2011
45. Australian ABC network, Australian journalist Reese Erlich — 3 October 2011
46. Arabic/Spanish/English-language channel Russia Today — 11 October 2011
47. The Arabic-language channel Russia Today and journalist Hassan Nasr — 15 October 2011
48. Russian channel Pervy Kanal — 15 October 2011

49. Russian channel ORT — 15 October 2011
50. Russian channel HTB — 15 October 2011
51. Golos Rossii radio station — 15 October 2011
52. Ekho Moskvy radio station — 15 October 2011
53. Newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* newspaper — 15 October 2011
54. Indian channel B7 — 15 October 2011
55. Indian channel NDTV — 15 October 2011
56. Indian channel GTN — 15 October 2011
57. Indian independent channel Bloomberg — 15 October 2011
58. Indian newspaper *Indian Express* — 15 October 2011
59. Indian magazine *Hard Times News* — 15 October 2011
60. Indian magazine *Outlook India* — 15 October 2011
61. Australian station SBS, Australian journalist Mark Davis — 16 October 2011
62. American newspaper *The Washington Post*, American journalist Liz Sly — 19 October 2011
63. Cuban news agency Prensa Latina, Cuban journalist Martin Hachtoun — 21 October 2011
64. British newspaper *The Independent*, British journalist Robert Fisk — 23 October 2011
65. Website Counterpunch, American journalist Franklin Lamb (editor) — 23 October 2011
66. Danish TV2 News — 24 October 2011
67. Danish TV2 — 24 October 2011
68. British newspaper *The Daily Telegraph*, journalist Andrew Gilligan — 27 October 2011
69. Channel CNN Türk and journalists Cüneyt Özdemir, Amira Yalmad and Fatih Anci — 28 October 2011
70. Romanian State television TVR — 28 October 2011
71. Romanian television channel Realitatea TV — 28 October 2011
72. Romanian television channels Antena 1 and Antena 3 — 28 October 2011
73. Romanian channel Prima TV — 28 October 2011
74. Romanian newspaper *Evenimentul Zilei* — 28 October 2011
75. Romanian newspaper *Gândul* — 28 October 2011
76. Romanian newspaper *Jurnalul Național* — 28 October 2011
77. Romanian newspaper *Ediție Specială* (Craiova) — 28 October 2011
78. Romanian website ANA News — 28 October 2011

79. British channel ITN, British journalist Bill Neely — 30 October 2011

80. Iranian channel Al-Alam, journalist Majid Elham Bakhsh and the delegation that accompanied him — 31 October 2011

81. Chinese news agency Xinhua — 1 November 2011

82. German magazine *Der Spiegel*, German journalist Erich Follath — 1 November 2011

83. Croatian newspaper *Večernji list*, journalist Hassan Haidar Diab — 2 November 2011

84. Italian RAI television, journalist Giuseppe Bonavolontà — 5 November 2011

85. A group of French, Belgian and Italian Catholic journalists, led by the French journalist Thierry Meyssan, that included Serge Marchand (French), Béatrice Petit (French-Belgian), Francesco Condemi (Italian), Marie-Ange Patrizio (French), Claude Beaulieu (French), Samira Saidi (Algerian), Aymeric Coletta (French) Mario Villani (Italian), Clement Pasquet (French), Mother Agnes-Mariam de la Croix (French), Sister Carmel (French), Isabel Pisano (Spanish) François Wallemacq (Belgian), Jean Francois Vokaert (Belgian), Christophe Lamfallusy (Belgian), Marc George (France) — 10 November 2011

86. Irish newspaper *The Irish Times*, journalist Michael Jansen — 12 November 2011

87. British newspaper *The Sunday Times*, journalist Hala Jaber — 14 November 2011

88. AlJazeera English network, journalists Rula Amin and Afaf Saudi — 14 November 2011

89. Spanish newspaper *El País*, journalist Maria Angeles Espinosa — 17 November 2011

90. Russian Rossiya 24, journalist Anastasia Yurt — 19 November 2011

91. Arabic-language service of the broadcasting station Golos Rossii — 19 November 2011

92. Russian radio Kommersant FM — 19 November 2011

93. Russian magazine *Al-Mutawasit* — 19 November 2011

94. French-language service of the broadcasting station Golos Rossii — 19 November 2011

95. Spanish-language service of the Russian channel Segodnya — 19 November 2011

96. Bulgarian military newspaper, journalist Misho Dimitrov — 20 November 2011

97. Bulgarian political and economic journal, journalist Hristo Petrov — 20 November 2011

98. Swedish newspaper *Expressen*, Swedish journalist Kassem Hammadi — 20 November 2011

99. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Arabi*, delegation comprising: Magdy Mohamed, Ehab Hasan, Hisham Abdul Aziz, Sayyid Damardash Mohamed, Ali Zarzur and Mahomed Said Ahmed Ali — 20 November 2011

100. French press agency Agence France-Presse, journalist Sami Ketz — 20 November 2011

101. British channel ITN, British journalist Jonathan Miller — 21 November 2011

102. Tunisian newspaper *Al-Shuruq*, Tunisian journalist Nuri al-Sal — 23 November 2011

103. American newspaper *The New York Times*, American journalist Neil MacFarquhar — 28 November 2011

104. French television RTL and Luxembourg television and radio, journalist Karim Bala — 29 November 2011

105. American channel ABC News, journalist Barbara Jill Walters — 3 December 2011

106. Various French news agencies, French journalist Richard Labévière, researcher at the Institute Français du Proche Orient (IFPO), Eric Denec, professor at IFPO, and Saida Ben Hbeibes — 3 December 2011

107. Egyptian journalist Sana al-Said — 10 December 2011

108. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Anba al-Duwaliyya*, editor-in-chief Abduh Maghribi — 10 December 2011

109. Newspaper *Al-Jumhuriyya*, journalist and deputy editor Muhammad al-Fawwal — 10 December 2011

110. Journalist and media analyst Ilham al-Maliji — 10 December 2011

111. Newspaper *Al-Ahram*, journalist Muhammad Mahmud al-Sayyid — 10 December 2011

112. Magazine *Hurriyyati*, journalist Nura Khalaf — 10 December 2011

113. Egyptian newspaper *Akhbar al-Yawm*, deputy editor Muhammad Sai'd Jalal — 10 December 2011

114. Newspaper *Al-Ahram*, journalist Muhsin Abdulaziz — 10 December 2011

115. Arabic-language edition of *Al-Ahram*, Usama al-Dalil, head of the international section — 10 December 2011

116. *Al-Ahram*, journalist Ayman al-Sisi — 10 December 2011

117. Newspaper *Rose al-Yusuf*, deputy editor Yasir Mishali — 10 December 2011

118. Newspaper *Al-Yawm al-Sabi'*, journalist Rami al-Maliji — 10 December 2011

119. Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Ra'i*, journalist Shadiyah Ahmad al-Husari — 10 December 2011

120. Slovak newspaper *Extra Plus*, editor-in-chief Lenka Ardnašova — 11 December 2011

121. State publication *Tasar*, editor Robert Kolisek — 11 December 2011

122. Peter Durkovic, journalist specializing in the Middle East — 11 December 2011

123. Slovak television, journalist Filip Fosfic — 11 December 2011

124. Slovak television channel JOV, journalist Martin Kubala — 11 December 2011

125. Josef Durica, editor-in-chief of a weekly magazine — 11 December 2011

126. Andrea Emkova, journalist for State media — 11 December 2011

127. German radio and television — 12 December 2011

128. Japanese network Fuji, journalist Makoto Sasaki — 13 December 2011

129. German television channel ARD, journalist Jörg Ambruster — 15 December 2011

130. German television channel ZDF, journalist Dietmar Ossenberg — 15 December 2011

131. Japanese news agency Kyodo, journalist Takeshi Tsuchiya — 15 December 2011

132. Italian television channel RAI, journalist Giuseppe Bonavolontà — 16 December 2011

133. English-language channel Russia Today, journalist Sara Firth — 17 December 2011

134. Russian Arabic-language channel Russia Today, journalist Mariana Belenkaya — 16 December 2011

135. Italian news agency ANSA, journalist Annalisa Rapanà — 18 December 2011

136. Chinese magazine Travel News Weekly, editor Zhou Hui — 19 December 2011

137. Chinese magazine Global Travel Magazine, Tao Haibin — 19 December 2011

138. Chinese magazine Wings of China, editor Li Wei — 19 December 2011

139. Chinese magazine Wings of China, journalist Liu Qiang — 19 December 2011

140. Chinese magazine Wangjia Travel, editor Lin Haidong — 19 December 2011

141. Chinese magazine Wangjia Travel, editor Zao Yinghao — 19 December 2011

142. Chinese channel, Shanghai Media Group, editor Zao Qi — 19 December 2011

143. Chinese channel, Shanghai Media Group, editor Jin Song — 19 December 2011

144. Chinese channel, Shanghai Media Group, editor Bao Gang — 19 December 2011

145. Chinese magazine *Century Business Herald*, editor Yu Meng — 19 December 2011

146. Chinese website Blashe, editor Ruan Yunong — 19 December 2011

147. Chinese newspaper *China Youth Daily*, editor Ho Yanguang — 19 December 2011

148. Chinese international radio station, editor Qiu Xiaoyu — 19 December 2011

149. Chinese news agency Youth Reference News, editor Bao Limin — 19 December 2011

150. Japanese television channel TBS, Japanese journalist Yuta Furukawa — 19 December 2011

151. Chinese news agency Xinhua, Zeng Kaijun, Li Muzi and Li Jia — 20 December 2011

152. French news agency Agence France-Presse, journalist Sami Ketz — 20 December 2011

153. Belgian author and journalist Pierre Piccinin — 27 December 2011

154. Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri*, Japanese journalist Tao Shigeki — 26 December 2011

155. Lebanese channel Al-Jadeed, Firas Hatoum, Sa'duddin al-Rifa'i and Ali Sha'ban — 27 December 2011

156. Algerian national public television, Lotfi Salmi — 30 December 2011

157. Algerian television channel Thalitha TV, journalist Ibrahim Ma'zuz — 30 December 2011

158. Algerian radio Channel 1, journalist Samir Aqun — 30 December 2011

159. Algerian radio Channel 2, journalist Farida Ait Ali Said — 30 December 2011

160. Algerian news agency, journalist Nouari Ghalab — 30 December 2011

161. Japanese newspaper *Mainichi*, journalist Hiroaki Wada — 1 January 2012

162. Japanese broadcasting station TBS, Japanese journalist Shigenori Kanehira — 3 January 2012

163. Italian State television, journalist Fulvio Grimaldi — 3 January 2012

164. French journalist Hervé Degal — 3 January 2012

165. BBC News, Lebanese journalist Mohammed Balout — 3 January 2012

166. Newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, journalist Yoshihiro Kando — 3 January 2012

167. Turkish newspaper *Milli Gazeti* — 4 January 2012

168. Turkish television channel TV5 — 4 January 2012

169. Turkish newspaper *Milliyet* — 4 January 2012

170. Turkish news agency Ihlas — 4 January 2012

171. Turkish newspaper *Vatan* — 4 January 2012

172. Turkish newspaper *Aksam* — 4 January 2012

173. Turkish newspaper *Vakit* — 4 January 2012

174. Turkish newspaper *Yeni Safak* — 4 January 2012

175. Turkish English-language newspaper *Today's Zaman* — 4 January 2012

176. Turkish television channel KON — 4 January 2012

177. Turkish newspaper *Hürriyet* — 4 January 2012

178. Turkish website Haber Türk — 4 January 2012

179. Turkish television channel STV — 4 January 2012

180. Turkish newspaper *Yeni Asya* — 4 January 2012

181. Turkish newspaper *Bugün* — 4 January 2012

182. Turkish newspaper *Sözgü* — 4 January 2012

183. Turkish newspaper *Sabah* — 4 January 2012

184. Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet* — 4 January 2012

185. British newspaper *The Guardian*, journalist Ian Black — 5 January 2012

186. Japanese State television NHK, Japanese journalist Yujiru Futori — 6 January 2012

187. Russian press delegation, journalist Dmitry [...] — 6 January 2012

188. Broadcasting station CNN, British journalist Dominic Robertson — 8 January 2012

189. Spanish State television, journalist Oscar Fernando Gómez — 8 January 2012

190. Lebanese channel Al-Jadeed, correspondent Firas Hatoum — 7 January 2012

191. British journalist Elizabeth Cocker — 8 January 2012

192. Russian journalist Boris Dolgov — 8 January 2012

193. Polish journalist Marcin Domalaga — 8 January 2012

194. Polish journalist Mateusz Piskorski — 8 January 2012

195. Polish journalist Kornel Sawinski — 8 January 2012

196. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Jumhuriyya*, journalist Sayyid Husayn Abdul'al — 8 January 2012

197. Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, journalist Alberto Negri — 9 January 2012

198. Italian-Arab Centre, Lebanese journalist Talal Khreis — 9 January 2102

199. German newspaper *Bild Zeitung*, journalist Julian Reichelt — 10 January 2012

200. Spanish State news agency EFE, journalist Javier Rodríguez — 10 January 2012

201. Canadian radio and television network CBC, journalist Susan Ormiston — 10 January 2012

202. Belgian television channel VRT, Belgian journalist Rudi Vranckx — 10 January 2012

203. American channel CBS News, journalist Elizabeth Palmer — 11 January 2012

204. Iranian journalist Mosta[illegible] Afzalzadeh — 11 January 2012

205. BBC, journalist Tim[illegible] Whewell — 11 January 2012

206. Czech television, Jan Moláček and Martin Bujin — 12 January 2012

207. Editor-in-chief of the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* — 13 January 2012

208. Channel Sky News, journalist Jeremy Thompson — 13 January 2012

209. Voice of America radio and television, journalist Elizabeth Arrot — 13 January 2012

210. Newspaper *The Financial Times*, journalist Abigail Fielding-Smith — 14 January 2012

211. Newspaper *Los Angeles Times*, journalist Alexandra Zavis — 14 January 2012

212. Argentine journalist Karen Marón, currently working for French international radio — 14 January 2012

213. Arabic-language Russian channel Russia Today, journalist Mazin Yusuf — 15 January 2012

214. English-language channel Russia Today, journalist Sarah Firth — 15 January 2012

215. Chinese news agency Xinhua, journalist Wang Chu — 15 January 2012

216. Netherlands State television, journalist Jan Eikelboom — 17 January 2012

217. German television channel ARD, German journalist Jörg Ambruster — 17 January 2012

218. American channel NBC News, American journalist Ayman Mohyeldin — 17 January 2012

219. Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, journalist Lorenzo Cremonesi — 18 January 2012

220. BBC international news department, journalist Jeremy Bowen — 18 January 2012

221. Japanese news agency JIJI, Japanese journalist Kazuhide Iketaki — 18 January 2012

222. Netherlands television RLT4, journalist Roel Maria Geeraedts — 18 January 2012

223. Network CNN, journalist Arwa Damon — 19 January 2012

224. Middle East bureau of the American newspaper *Wall Street Journal*, journalist William Spindle — 19 January 2012

225. Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, Italian journalist Alberto Stabile — 19 January 2012

226. Spanish radio station Sociedad Española de Radio (Radio SER), Mariela Rubio Jiménez — 19 January 2012

227. Reuters news agency, journalist Mariam Karouny — 19 January 2012

228. Newspaper *The Washington Post*, journalist Elizabeth Sly — 19 January 2012

229. Lebanese channel Al-Hurra, Sahar Arnaout and Mustafa Asi — 19 January 2012

230. Newspaper *The Financial Times*, British journalist Michael Robert Peel — 19 January 2012

231. *The New York Times* magazine, American journalist Kareem Fahim — 20 January 2012

232. Channel Press TV, station correspondent Salwa al-Khatib — 20 January 2012

233. Magazine *The New Yorker*, correspondent Jon Anderson — 21 January 2012

234. Spanish Basque television channel Euskal Irrati Telebista (EITB), Spanish journalist Mikel Ayestaran — 24 January 2012

235. Norwegian television channel TV2, journalist Paul Jørgensen — 25 January 2012

236. Newspaper *The New York Times*, photographer Tomas Munita — 26 January 2012

237. British newspaper *The Times*, British journalist Richard Beeston — 26 January 2012

238. German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, German journalist Tomas Avenarius — 29 January 2012

239. German broadcasting channel SDR, German journalist Björn Blaschke — 29 January 2012

240. Chinese news agency Xinhua, journalist Qin Haishi, and his accompanying team — 29 January 2012

241. Newspaper *The Washington Post*, British journalist Alice Fordham — 30 January 2012

242. Newspaper *Asahi Shimbun*, Japanese journalist Yoshihiro Kando — 31 January 2012

243. Newspaper *Daily China*, Chinese journalist Lianxing Li — 31 January 2012

244. Radio France, French journalist Valérie Crova — 1 February 2012

245. Swedish television, Swedish journalist Samir Abu Eid — 2 February 2012

246. Spanish newspaper *La Razón*, journalist Francesca Cicardi — 2 February 2012

247. French newspaper *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Sara Daniel — 2 February 2012

248. Russian channel Pervy Kanal, journalist Timur Siraziev — 3 February 2012

249. Austrian journal *Österreich*, Australian journalist Isabelle Daniel — 3 February 2012

250. Cypriot newspaper *The Irish Times*, journalist Michael Jansen — 3 February 2012

251. Japanese newspaper *The Sankei Shimbun*, journalist Kiyoshi Ouchi — 3 February 2012

252. British magazine *The Economist*, journalist John Rodenbeck — 4 February 2012

253. Spanish news agency EFE, journalist Enrique Rubio — 5 February 2012

254. Newspaper *The Independent*, journalist Charlotte McDonald-Gibson — 6 February 2012

255. Newspaper *Die Basler Zeitung*, journalist Astrid Frefel — 6 February 2012

256. Channel Rossiya 24, journalist Anastasia Burt — 7 February 2012

257. British channel ITN News, journalist William Needy — 7 February 2012

258. Russian Arabic-language channel Russia Today, Russian journalist Vasily Eremenko — 10 February 2012

259. Independent British author and journalist Jonathan Steele — 12 February 2012

260. Swedish journalist of Russian origin Alexander Fridback — 13 February 2012

261. Swedish broadcasting corporation Sveriges Radio, journalist Cecilia Sandles — 13 February 2012

262. Independent Swedish journalist Alexandra Sandles — 13 February 2012

263. Russian channel Russia Today (English and Spanish), British journalist Mariana Belenkaya — 13 February 2012

264. Italian television, Italian journalist Maria Giatta — 20 February 2012

265. Russian television channel TV Tsentr, journalist Dmitry Grafov — 20 February 2012

266. French news agency, journalist Sami Ketz — 20 February 2012

267. French news agency, journalist Djilali Belaid and photographer Anwar Amro — 22 February 2012

268. Arabic Service of the BBC, journalist Omar Abdel Hakim al-Raziq — 22 February 2012

269. Newspaper *The Sunday Times*, British journalist Hala Jaber — 22 February 2012

270. Danish television, journalist Steffen Jensen and his accompanying team — 23 February 2012

271. Russia radio station Komsomolskaya Pravda, journalist Dmitry Steshin — 23 February 2012

272. Newspaper *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, journalist Vladimir Snegirev — 23 February 2012

273. Russian television channel REN TV, journalist Mikhail Bazhenov — 23 February 2012

274. Indian channel CNN-IBN, journalist Surya Gangadharan — 23 February 2012

275. Indian television channel IBN7 TV, journalist Smita Sharma — 23 February 2012

276. Indian English-language magazine *Tehelka*, journalist Prem Shankar Jha — 23 February 2012

277. Indian magazine *The Front Line*, journalist John Cherian — 23 February 2012

278. Indian magazine *Geopolitics* and U Media group — 23 February 2012

279. Indian newspaper *The Telegraph*, journalist Krishan Nayar — 23 February 2012

280. Indian newspaper *Media Star News*, journalist Sayed Ahmad Kazmi — 23 February 2012

281. Daily newspaper *Sahafat Urdu Daily*, Aman Abbas — 23 February 2012

282. Urdu-language newspaper *Siyasat Jadid*, Dr. Aijaz Ilmi — 23 February 2012

283. News agency Aalmi Urdu Service Agency, journalist Sheikh Manzoor Ahmed — 23 February 2012

284. Indian English-language magazine *Hard News*, journalist Kapoor Sanjay — 25 February 2012

285. President of the Indian Journalists Association, Naik Vijapurushtam — 23 February 2012

286. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Anwar*, editor-in-chief Adel al-Jawjari — 23 February 2012

287. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram* Arabic edition, international affairs editor Usama al-Dalil — 23 February 2012

288. Journalist and political analyst Ilhami al-Maliji — 23 February 2102

289. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Jumhuriyya*, journalist Muhammad al-Fawwal — 23 February 2012

290. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Anba al-Duwaliyya*, journalist Abduh Maghribi — 23 February 2012

291. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Arabi*, journalist Ihab Hasan — 23 February 2012

292. Egyptian newspaper *Al-Arabi*, editor-in-chief Magdy al-Bassiouni — 23 February 2012

293. Russian television channel Pervy Kanal, journalist Anton Ponomarev — 24 February 2012

294. Venezuelan television channel TeleSUR, journalist Adriana Gorriarán Sivori — 24 February 2012

295. Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, journalist Alberto Stabile — 24 February 2012

296. Newspaper *The Irish Times*, Cypriot journalist Michael Jansen — 24 February 2012

297. Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri*, Japanese journalist Tao Shigeki — 24 February 2012

298. German television ARD, German journalist Jörg Ambruster — 24 February 2012

299. Croatian television, journalist Josip Saric — 24 February 2012

300. Lebanese newspaper *Al-Akhbar*, Lebanese journalist Mohamed Nazzal and his team — 24 February 2012

301. Jordanian news network Al-Wahdah, editor-in-chief Omar al-Tall — 25 February 2012

302. Jordanian newspaper *Al-Shahid*, Jordanian journalist Abdullah al-Adham — 25 February 2012

303. Satellite channel Al-Haqiqah, Jordanian journalist Mu'adh al-Battoush — 25 February 2012

304. Turkish newspaper *Yeni Şafak*, journalist Hikmet Kuk — 25 February 2012

305. Turkish newspaper *Habertürk*, journalist Ceyda Karan — 25 February 2012

306. Turkish newspaper *Hurriyet*, journalist Emre Kizilkay — 25 February 2012

307. Turkish newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, journalist Utku Çakirözer — 25 February 2012

308. Turkish news channel NTV, journalist Mata Şubukçi — 25 February 2012

309. Turkish journalist on CNN Türk, Turk Hanad Ashik — 25 February 2012

310. Turkish channel Kanal D, journalist Cim Takal — 25 February 2012

311. Arabic service of the BBC, Egyptian journalist Gamal Abdel Aziz Iz al-Arab — 25 February 2012

312. Argentine news website GARA, Karen Marón — 25 February 2012

313. Lebanese broadcasting channel Sawt el Mada, Lebanese journalist Randala Jabbour — 25 February 2012

314. Algerian newspaper *Sawt Al Ahrar*, Algerian journalist Omar Dalal — 25 February 2012

315. Television channel APTN and news agency Associated Press, journalists Zayna Karim and Bassam Hatum, — 25 February 2012

316. Iranian newspaper *Aftab-e Yazd*, journalist Majid Dibazar Parcheh Bafi — 28 February 2012

317. Iranian newspaper *Ibtikar*, journalist Mehdi Vakili — 28 February 2012

318. Iranian newspaper *Ettela'at*, journalist Arash Miri Khani — 28 February 2012

319. Iranian newspaper *Jamejam Daily*, journalist Hossein Taukpur — 28 February 2012

320. Iranian newspaper *Mellat-e Ma*, journalist Farzad Khalafi — 28 February 2012

321. Iranian newspaper *Hamshahri*, journalist Abdullah al-Boughish — 28 February 2012

322. Iranian newspaper *Kayhan News*, journalist Daryush Askari — 28 February 2009

323. Iranian journal *Hamshahri Diplomatik*, journalist Nasser Asadi — 28 February 2012

324. Iranian website Rajanews, journalist Ahsan Salehi — 28 February 2012

325. Iranian website Tabnak, journalist Eskandar Salehi — 28 February 2012

326. Iranian website 598, journalist Muhammad Hossein Hemmati Nejad — 28 February 2012

327. Iranian website Bulletin News, journalist Babak Amini — 28 February 2012

328. Iranian website Rajanews, journalist Mostafa Ahmadi — 28 February 2012

329. Iranian news website Fars News, journalist Hossein Rostami — 28 February 2012

330. Iranian news website Mehr News, journalist Hossein Hanizadeh — 28 February 2012

331. Iranian news website ISNA, journalist Dawud Hajebian — 28 February 2012

List of Arab and foreign news organizations that have been granted entry visas since 1 December 2011 and that have not yet entered the country

1. Radio Havana Cuba, journalist Vidal Dominguez — 8 December 2011

2. Algerian newspaper *Al-Khabar* — 24 December 2011

3. American television channel NBC — 26 December 2011

4. Japanese newspaper *Hokkaido Shimbun*, head of office Kazayuki Bandok, accompanied by the Egyptian journalist Mahmud Id Mahmud Ibrahim — 26 December 2011

5. Independent news agency Trinity M, journalist Hristo Petrov — 7 December 2011

6. Newspaper *Il Giornale*, journalist Fausto Biloslavo — 28 December 2011

7. Japanese television channel Nippon, Turutumita Wakishi Tumura — 1 January 2012

8. British writer and university professor James Harkin — 8 January 2012

9. Austrian television channel ORF, journalist Karim al-Jawhari — 12 January 2012

10. Television channel NHK, journalist Toshihiro Fuji — 12 January 2012

11. Newspaper *The New York Times*, journalist Nada Bakri — 15 January 2012

12. Russian magazine Odnako, Russian journalist Bakhtiar Ahmad Khanov — 19 January 2012

13. Independent journalist Vladimir Kiselev — 19 January 2012

14. Russian independent analytical journal, journalist Oleg Vladikin — 19 January 2012

15. Russian newspaper *Tribuna*, journalist Andrei Ilyich — 19 January 2012

16. Spanish State television channel, Spanish journalist Maria Gonzales — 22 January 2012

17. Newspaper *Mladá Fronta Dnes*, and Czech journalist Pavel Novotný — 22 January 2012
18. Japanese newspaper *Minichi*, journalist Hiroaki Wada — 22 January 2012
19. Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japanese journalist Tao Shigeki — 22 January 2012
20. American magazine *Harpers*, American journalist Charles Glass — 22 January 2012
21. Chinese newspaper *Evening Mirror News*, journalist Hai Lang Wu — 25 January 2012
22. Japanese television channel NHK, journalist Sumiyaki Fuhiyoshi — 25 January 2012
23. European Pressphoto Agency, Lebanese photographer Nabil Mounzer — 5 February 2012
24. German magazine *Zenith*, German journalist Daniel Gerlach — 7 February 2012
25. News agency Associated Press, American journalist Ben Hubbard — 7 February 2012
26. Chinese newspaper *Global Times*, journalists Zhou Hao and Mei Lian Lin — 21 February 2012
27. Chinese channel Phoenix Television, journalist Lao Yuhan — 22 February 2012
28. Russian television channel REN TV, journalist Anatolievich — 22 February 2012
29. Russian radio and television channel Zefirzada, journalist Fedor Ivanich — 23 January 2012
30. Author and researcher Christoph R. Horstel — 1 March 2012
31. Russian English-language television channel Russia Today, journalist Artem Voroby — 4 March 2012
32. Russian news agency Novosti, journalist Valery Milenkov — 4 March 2012
33. Chinese State television channel CCTV, journalist Jiajie Bao — 5 March 2012
34. Ukrainian television channel Inter, journalist Akim Galimov — 5 March 2012

United Nations S/2012/162

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 March 2012
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 15 March 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to point out the following:

On the morning of 12 March 2012, terrorist groups carried out another horrific massacre in certain districts of the city of Homs, resulting in the deaths of some 45 civilians, not to mention the atrocities which those groups have perpetrated in other parts of Syria. The terrorist groups have taken to carrying out such massacres and blaming them on the Government shortly before the United Nations Security Council or the Human Rights Council meet to discuss the situation in the Middle East or Syria. Their aim is to denigrate Syria and to use this and other tragedies as media fodder. The terrorists slaughtered the innocent civilians and took pictures, which they sent to television and satellite channels complicit in misinformation and agitation. Such activities are inconsistent with journalistic objectivity: they distort the facts and support terrorism. The competent authorities have detained a number of the terrorists, who have confessed to committing those acts.

Information provided by the victims' families and their relatives shows that all of the youths, women and children who perished had been kidnapped and murdered shortly beforehand by armed terrorist groups. They had opposed the terrorist groups' activities and refused to submit to their schemes. In particular, many had been identified by the terrorists as supporters of the State.

The fatwas issued by certain clerics in Arab States, and their incitement to military intervention in Syria, are directly behind the causes of the massacres in Homs and other Syrian governorates.

The Syrian Arab Republic calls on all States and organizations that combat terrorism to take a stand against the killing, bloodshed and strife, and to press the well-known parties to end their support for terrorism. In accordance with the counter-terrorism resolutions of the Security Council, they should help to end the shedding of Syrian blood and hold accountable those States and actors that sponsor terrorism in Syria.

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that it is fulfilling its duty to protect its citizens, disarm the terrorists and hold the perpetrators accountable. It is pursuing its endeavours to find a political solution to the crisis in Syria by cooperating with Special Envoy Kofi Annan and building on the range of democratic achievements that began in March of last year. Those achievements

include the lifting of the state of emergency; the issuance of laws on political pluralism, local elections and freedom of the media; actions to address the economic situation of citizens; the promulgation of a new constitution; and other measures to promote political life and foster pluralism and democracy towards the inception of a comprehensive reform process. Syria has chosen to confront the problems facing it through political dialogue. Members of the opposition and independents are helping to tackle the issues of concern and restore security and stability in Syria.

Syria expresses its hope that States Members of the United Nations and all relevant United Nations agencies will share that approach to tackling the current crisis in Syria, and that they will work to end the violence, prevent foreign funding of terrorism and restore security and stability.

I should be grateful if this letter could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations